C. BALASUBRAMANIAN

A Study of the Literature of the Cēra Country

(upto 11th Century A.D.)

UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS

A STUDY OF THE LITERATURE OF THE CĒRA COUNTRY

(upto 11th Century A.D.)

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FOREWORD

Prof. G. R. DAMODARAN, B.Sc. Engg., C.Engg., D.Sc., FIEE (Lond.),
FI NUC E (Lond.), FIE (India).
Vice-Chancellor, University of Madras.

In the course of this book the author has made a critical study of the literature produced in the Cera Country before the 12th Century of the Christian Era. He focusses our attention on the political, social, religious and artistic aspects of the life of the people of that land in its heyday.

The book is divided into five chapters dealing with Sangam Literature, Patinen-Kil-K-Kanakku, the Twin epics, other works and Devotional Literature respectively. We have an in-depth study of Patirruppattu which will be a boon to those who do research on the Ceras of the Sangam age. The author presents the differing view points of reputed historians and finally expresses his own opinion. He deals with the question whether the hereditary right to rule came down through the son or the daughter.

Particularly interesting is his description of the Cera army as inferred from literature. We learn that there were eight types of elephant-forces, seven types of cavalry and six types of soldiers-on-foot, each type serving a specific purpose and with no overlapping of functions and the the consequent confusion.

The book deals with the literary merits of Silappathikaram and also the light it throws on the life of the ancient Tamils. The same comprehensive view is taken of Manimekalai. Referring to Tamil devotional literature produced in the Cera country, a detailed account of Kulasekara Alwar is given and a critical appreciation of his *magnum opus*, Perumal Thirumozhi is attempted. Towards the end of the book we find the poetic aspects and the outstanding features of the five minor works of the Saivite saints.

Dr. C. Balasubramanian deserves to be congratulated for this critical work which will go a long way to help scholars and researchers in the field of South Indian History and Culture.

Madras-5
28-2-80

G. R. Damodaran

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to record my deep sense of gratitude to the authorities of the Madras University, especially to the members of the Syndicate, Vice-Chancellor and Registrar for their kind and noble gesture to bring out this volume.

With a profound feeling of gratitude, I express my heartfelt thanks to Prof. G. R. Damodaran, B.SC., Engg., C Engg., D.SC., FIEE (Lond.), FI NUC E (Lond.), FIE (India), the Vice-Chancellor of the Madras University for having adorned this volume with his valuable foreword.

My thanks are due to my dear colleagues Dr. V. Jayadevan, Thiru A. A. Manavalan, Dr. R. Mayandi and Dr. E. Sundaramoorthy who have rendered their service towards proof-correction.

I am happy to acknowledge the help rendered by M/s. Rathnam Press, Madras-1, in printing this volume very well.

I am thankfull to Thiru R. Lingesan for having designed the cover pretty well.

C. BALASUBRAMANIAN

INTRODUCTION

In ancient days Tamilnadu was ruled by the kings of three mighty dynasties, viz., the Cērās, the Cōḷās and the Pāṇṭiyās. That part of South India called the Cērā country is now known as Kerala (Cērā>Kērā>Kērala). Tamil was the language spoken by the people and also the language of the court and the government of that land. It is only in the later centuries (after the 12th century A.D.) that Malayalam developed as an independent language and gradually replaced Tamil in the courts and other places. So much so, Tamil poets flourished in the Cērā country from the earliest times till 11th century A.D. This thesis is the result of a critical study of the works of those poets as well as the works of other poets who have referred to the Cērā country and its rulers.

The earliest extant literary works in Tamil are in the form of anthologies called Sangham literature. Of them, Patiṟṟuppattu is a work wholly devoted to the Cērā dynasty and the Cērā country. As it is replete with details regarding the political, social and other aspects of the rulers and the people of the Cērā country, it has been dealt with in a separate section. It is one of the eight anthologies called Eṭṭuttokai. The seven other anthologies also contain informations regarding the country and the people, though not in as much abundance as Patiṟṟuppattu. Those informations have been collected and analysed in the next section. The anthology of Ten Idylls (called Pattuppāṭṭu) also contains several facts which have been gathered and presented in another section. These three sections form Chapter I.

Chapter II is devoted to the war song called Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu, one of the eighteen Tamil works called Patiṉeṉ Kīḻk-kaṇakku. This war song deals with the battle of a Cērā king and has been found useful here. The next chapter analyses the material in the earliest epics Cilappatikāram and Maṇimēkalai. The former is an epic written by a Cērā prince who renounced

his claim to the crown and became a Jain ascetic. This is unique in its treatment of the political, social and religious conditions of its period and has been found to be of great value herein.

Among other Tamil works, Takaṭūr yāttirai is lost except for a few stanzas available now. Only a portion of Muttoḷḷāyiram has survived the times and there are 20 stanzas in it dwelling upon the Cērā dynasty. Puṛapporuḷ Veṇpāmālai is a grammatical treatise written by a Cērā prince; the quatrains composed by him to illustrate the various themes of political and social aspects are pieces of fine poetic imagination, though they refer to the Cērā kings only in a few places. These three works have been treated in chapter IV. The last chapter is on the devotional works of the poets of the Cērā country and are found to be of no less importance than the earlier literary works.

On the whole, it has been found that 27 poets have sung on the Cērā country in their literary creations and 19 kings of the Cērā dynasty have been eulogised by them. Among the Cērā kings, eight had been poets themselves. Eight other rulers have been found to have had affinity with this dynasty. It has been felt essential to refer to the alien kings or kings of other dynasties who ruled over portions of the Cērā country at times. There are three such rulers. Separate lists of such poets and kings have been appended. Notes on the important places and mountains of the country which have been referred to in the literary works are also given in Appendix VI.

The hymns of Kulacēkara Āḻvār, a Cērā king and devotee, have been translated and given in Appendix VII. The literary beauties of these hymns have been treated in the chapter relating to the devotional literature. Similarly, the poetic aspects of the other works have been dealt with in the respective chapters, of course, not in detail as the number of pages allotted for the thesis is limited. All the outstanding features of the works mentioned above have been presented in a brief and cogent form.

It is believed that this critical study would throw much light on the literary, political and social aspects of the Cērā country and enable scholars interested in South Indian Culture to have a correct view of the back ground of the history of Kerala State which is having Malayalam as its language.

The method of transliteration adopted herein is the same as that of the Tamil Lexicon of the University of Madras. But some of the Tamil and Sanskrit words which are very popular and have already been frequently used by many authors are given in the forms in which they have been written by them.

MADRAS–5,
24th January 1980.

C. BALASUBRAMANIAN.

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND DIACRITICAL MARKS

The system here adopted is the same as in Tamil Lexicon of the University of Madras, Vol. VI p. LXVIII.

Tamil alphabets and their English symbols with diacritical marks.

VOWELS

அ	— a	எ	— e
ஆ	— ā	ஏ	— ē
இ	— i	ஐ	— ai
ஈ	— ī	ஒ	— o
உ	— u	ஓ	— ō
ஊ	— ū	ஔ	— au

CONSONANTS

க்	— k	ம்	— m
ங்	— ṅ	ய்	— y
ச்	— c	ர்	— r
ஞ்	— ñ	ல்	— l
ட்	— ṭ	வ்	— v
ண்	— ṇ	ழ்	— ḻ
த்	— t	ள்	— ḷ
ந்	— n	ற்	— ṟ
ப்	— p	ன்	— ṉ

Aytam ஃ — ḵ

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Aiṅ.	for	Aiṅkuṟunūṟu
Aka.	,,	Akanāṉūṟu
Cilap.	,,	Cilappatikāram
Cintā.	,,	Cīvaka Cintāmaṇi
Ciṟupāṉ.	,,	Ciṟupāṇaṟṟuppaṭai
D. Alaṅkāram	,,	Dandiyalaṅkāram
I. Kaḷaviyal	,,	Iṟaiyaṉār Kaḷaviyal
I. V. Pāṭṭiyal	,,	Ilakkaṇa Viḷakka-p-pāṭṭiyal
K. Parani	,,	Kaliṅkattu-p-Paraṇi
Kamba.	,,	Kamba Rāmāyanam
Kuṟaḷ.	,,	Tirukkuṟaḷ
Kuṟu.	,,	Kuṟuntokai
Maṇi.	,,	Maṇimēkalai
Maduraik	,,	Madurai-k-Kāñci
Mullai.	,,	Mullaippāṭṭu
N. Akapporuḷ	,,	Nampi Akapporuḷ
Naṟ.	,,	Naṟṟiṇai
Neṭu.	,,	Neṭunalvāṭai
P. Antāti.	,,	Pon-Vaṇṇa-t-tantāti
P. Kali.	,,	Pālai-k-kali
Pari.	,,	Paripāṭal
Paṭṭiṉa.	,,	Paṭṭiṉappālai
Patiṟṟup.	,,	Patiṟṟuppattu
Perumpāṇ.	,,	Perumpāṇāṟṟuppaṭai
Porun.	,,	Porunarāṟṟuppaṭai
Puṟa.	,,	Puṟanāṉūṟu

P. Pāṭṭiyal	for	Paṉṉiru Pāṭṭiyal
P. Tiraṭṭu	,,	Puṟa-t-tiraṭṭu
P. Tirumoḻi	,,	Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi
P. V. Mālai.	,,	Puṟapporuḷ Veṇpāmālai
Tirumuruku.	,,	Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai
Tol.	,,	Tolkāppiyam
Tol. Col.	,,	Tolkāppiyam Collatikāram
Tol. Eḻuttu.	,,	Tolkāppiyam Eḻuttatikāram
Tol. Poruḷ.	,,	Tolkāppiyam Poruḷatikāram
T. M. Kōvai	,,	Tiruvārūr Mummaṇi-k-kōvai
T. N. Ulā	,,	Tiruk-Kayilāya Ñāṉa Ulā

A NOTE ON THE REFERENCES

The numbers given in the footnotes refer to the stanzas or lines or pages as noted below:—

In the case of the works of Eṭṭuttokai, the number refers to the stanza;

In the case of the Idylls of Pattupāṭṭu, it refers to the line;

In the case of the Grammatical work Tolkāppiyam it refers to the 'cūttiram'.

In the case of other works, it refers to the page and is preceded by the letter p;

In some cases, both the stanza or paṭalam or kātai and the particular lines in it are noted e.g., 10: 11–13 means lines 11 to 13 in the tenth stanza or Paṭalam or Kātai.

CHAPTER I

SANGHAM LITERATURE

"Even before the ancient Tamils established any contact with the alien countries, they were in possession of a rich and growing literature in their language. We may, therefore, presume that the Tamil Culture was quite native to their genius, and during those days, it progressed unrelated to and unadulterated with the literature of the foreign tongues. The rich contribution of nature and the virtuous life led by the ancient Tamils together formed the foundation for their literary creations", says Dr. M. Varadarajanar, on one of his scholarly contributions to the Tamil Encyclopaedia (Vol. V—page 478). Tamil enjoys the reputation of possessing the richest stores of indigenous literature according to Max Muller. Tolkāppiyam, the original and standard work on Tamiḻ grammar, refers to the existence of previous treaties on grammar in very many of its cūttirams. From this, we are led to presuppose that there should have existed, before Tolkāppiyam came to be composed, works on grammar or codified literary conventions and a wealth of literature without which a grammar could have had no independent existence. Prof. Rev. Thaninayakam declares in his eminent work 'Tamiḻ-t-tūtu', that the Tamiḻ poets took up, for the purpose of exhibiting their poetic skill, the lives of the people as their first choice and nature as a factor in assistance, and that no poet in any language has drawn on nature so profusely as the ancient Tamiḻ poets. The truth of the assertion by W. H. Hudson that 'literature is an expression of life through the medium of language" is no where proved as copiously as in Tamiḻ.

The Sangham period has been dated between B.C. 500 and A.D. 200.

The Sangham classics have been classified into certain groups called the Eṭṭuttokai and the Pattuppāṭṭu. Some of the works

included under the first group rank as the oldest literary creations in Tamil. And Patirruppattu belonging to this group deals exclusively with the Cērās. Therefore, this thesis commences with a discussion on Patirruppattu.

PATIRRUPPATTU

THE CĒRĀ KINGS OF PATIRRUPPATTU

The antiquity of the Cērās

Tamiḻakam has historical antiquity anterior even to the Christian era. The Tamiḻs have been proud of their glorious heritage of cultural and literary traditions. In the ancient days, the sub-continent of India comprised of many independent kingdoms. South India was under the rule of three kings, the Cērās, the Cōḻās and the Pāṇḍiyās. Paṉampāraṉār, the contemporary of Tolkāppiyaṉār states that the country lying in between the Vēṅkaṭam hills and Kaṉṉiyākumari was called, 'Tamiḻakam'[1] and Tolkāppiyaṉār states that the land was under the rule of three famous kings, the Cērās, the Cōḻās, and the Pāṇḍiyās.[2]

Of these three dynasties, Cērā kings were the most ancient and the most distinguished in ruling over a very wide stretch of land, in offering gifts to the poor and the learned and in the nobility of character.

The Cōḻās and the Pāṇḍiyās traced their descent to the Sun[3] and the Moon[4] respectively. There are no reliable or definite literary evidences to show as to which dynasty the Cērās belonged. There is an indication in the Villi-Bharatam, that the Cērās descended from Agni.[5] But the earlier literature does not support this view. Some historians have claimed divine origin for the

1. Paṉampāraṉār Pāyiram: 1–3.
2. Tol; Poruḷ : Ceyyuḷiyal: 79.
3. ' செங்கதிர்ச் செல்வன் திருக்குலம் ' (மணிமேகலை; பதிகம் : 9)
4. ' திங்கட் செல்வன் திருக்குலம் ' (சிலப்பதிகாரம்; 11 : 23)
5. ' இவன் செந்தழலோன் மரபாகி யீரேழுலகும் புகழ் சேரன் '
(வில்லி பாரதம் ; திரௌபதி மாலையிட்ட சருக்கம் : 45)

Cērā kings.[6] Evidently several references to the Cērās as 'Vāṉavars' in early Tamil literature[7] have led them to foster such assumption. Some scholars infer that the term 'Cērar' was derived from the term 'Cēralar'.[8] The term 'Cēral' denotes a mountain. The Cērās ruled over the tract of country stretching between the Arabian sea and the Western Ghats. They could have, for this reason, assumed the name 'Cēralar', that is, those belonging to the mountains. The word 'Cērar' is perhaps a corruption of the word 'Cēralar'. The Cēra Nādu was bounded on the east by the Western Ghats which extend from the Tapti on the north to the Potiya hills in the South. The Western Ghats are also called, the Saiyatri range. As they run to the West of Tamil Nādu they were called, 'Kuṭavarai' that is, the 'Western mountain' by the Tamils, and the Cērās who ruled over it were called 'Kuṭavars'.[9] In the inscriptions of Raja Raja Cōḻā, the Cērā country is mentioned as 'Kuṭavarai Nādu'.[10] Cēkkiḻār, the celebrated author of Periyapurāṇam calls Cēra Nādu, the 'Malai-nadu'.[11] The Cērās are indicated by several names in Tamil literature, such as 'Vāṉavaṉ',[12] 'Vāṉavarampan'[13] 'Kuṭṭuvan',[14] 'Kuṭakkō',[15] 'Poṟaiyaṉ',[16] 'Irumpoṟai',[17] 'Kaṭuṅkō',[18] and

6. Thiru V. Kanakasabhai Pillai; The Tamils 1800 years ago, p. 52.

7. Aka; 45, 77, 143, 159, 213, 309, 381. Puṟa; 2, 39, 126.

8. Tuṭicai Kiḻār. A. Chidambaranar : Cērar Varalāṟu p. அ.

Prof. Auvai S. Duraisami Pillai : Paṇṭai-nālai-c-Cēra Maṉṉar Varalāṟu : pp. 58–59.

9. Patiṟṟup; VI : 5 : 9; Puṟa; 17 : 40.

10. Tiru T. V. Sadasiva Pandarathar; Pirkāla-c-Cōḻar Carittiram, p. 103.

11. P. Purāṇam: Kaḻaṟiṟṟaṟivār Purāṇam : 1.

12. Cilap; 27 : 247; do. 30 : 1. Aka; 36 : 14; do. 77 : 15; do. 213 : 15; do. 309 : 10; 381 : 15; Puṟa; 126 : 14. Maṇi; 28 : 2.

13. Patiṟṟup; IV : 8 : 12. do. VI : 8 : 12. Aka; 45 : 17; do. 389 : 16. Puṟa; 2 : 12.

14. Naṟ; 395 : 4. Patiṟṟup; IX : 10 : 26. Aka; 91 : 13; do. 212 : 16; do. 290 : 12.

15. Maṇi; 28 : 104.

16. Patiṟṟup; VIII : 5 : 3. do. 7 : 1. do. IX : 6 : 3. do. 7 : 5.

17. Patiṟṟup; IX : 9 : 9; Puṟa; 22 : 34.

18. Puṟa; 387 : 30.

'Kotai'.[19] But they are usually referred to as 'Cēral', 'Cēralar' and 'Cēramā$\underline{n}$'.

The ancient Tamil works which contain abundant information on the Cōḷā and Pāṇḍiyā dynasties make no mention of the origin of the Cērās at all. We have to infer therefore that the Cēra kings belonged to a very old dynasty, perhaps the oldest of the three.[20] This inference is also supported by the fact that we always refer to the Tamil Kings as Cēra, Cōḷa and Pāṇḍiyar mentioning the Cērās before the other two. The Puṟanāṉūṟu collections include some of the oldest of poetic compositions. The compiler of this anthology has placed the poems relating to the Cērās first and then the poems relating ,to the other two kings.[21] There is yet another evidence supporting this view in the mention of the three kings in the order, the Kuṭṭuvaṉ (Cēraṉ), Celiyaṉ (Cōlaṉ) and Cempiyaṉ (Pāṇḍiyan) in Ciṟupāṇāṟ-ṟuppaṭai.[22]

In certain Sanskrit works we meet with the allusions to the Cēra kings and their country. In the Ramayana by Valmiki, which is considered to be the Adi kavya in Sanskrit, there are certain references to Keralam and Muracipaṭṭaṉam as places to which, among others, the Vanara king Sugriva despatched his men to search for Sita.[23] Muracipaṭṭiṉam is presumed to be Muciṟi. a town now located on the West coast of India. We learn from early Tamil works[24] and Pliny,[25] the anciet Greek historian that this city, Muciṟi was a famous sea-port town situated at the confluence of Cuḷḷi (the present Pēriyāṟu) with the sea, that it had been the capital of the Cērās for some time and that the

19. Aka; 93 : 20. do. 263 : 11. Puṟa; 48 : 1; do. 49 : 3. Puṟa; 54 : 8. Cilap; 25 : 3.

20. Thiru M. Raghava Ayyangar; Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ, p. 6.

21. Puṟa; 2 on Cēra; Puṟa; 3 on Pāṇḍiya; Puṟa; 4 on Cōḷa.

22. Ciṟupāṇ; 49, 65, 82.

23. Kishkinda Kandam; Sarga : 43; Sloka : 12.

24. Aka; 40; Puṟa; 343.

25. Nagam Iyer: T. V. C. Manual; Vol. I, p. 291.

mercantile marine used to call at this port to be laden with the export commodities such as pepper, ginger etc.

The other Kavya, Mahabarata also contains certain allusions to the Cērās. A Cērā king is said to have fought with the Kauravas as an ally of the Pandavas. The Pūranāṉūṟu contains a reference to a Cērā king as having supplied the armies of both the Pandavas and the Kauravas with the daily ration of food.[26] There is a mention of this fact in Cilappatikāram too.[27] The Cērās are called Keralaputras in the inscriptions of the famous Mauryan Emperor Asoka.[28] These lithic records disclose the proud fact, that the three ancient kings of Tamiḻakam have never bowed before any other monarch, and were independent kings even in the remote past of History.

We learn from the Sangham literature, that there had never been internecine warfare among the Cērā kings and Chieftains. In fact, even the princes of the royal household have not been heard of fighting for the throne.[29]

Kārikiḻār has defined the boundaries of the ancient Tamiḻ Nadu. He states, that it extended upto the Himalayas on the north, to Kanniyakumari in the South, to the Arabian sea and the Bay of Bengal on the West and the East.[30] Kuṟuṅkōḻiyūr Kiḻār has given an identical definition of the boundaries of Tamiḻ Nadu.[31]

Of the three ancient ruling dynasties of Tamiḻ Nadu, the Cērās were the most heroic, possessed more love for Tamiḻ and had been wielding power over more extensive regions than the other two dynasties. Their country yielded more natural wealth, and they were more generous in disposition.

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26. Puṟa ; 2.
27. Cilap ; 29 Ūcal Vari.
28. V. A. Smith, Early History of India, p. 173.
29. Mayilai Seeni Venkatasami, Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ ; p. 2.
30. Puṟa ; 6.
31. Puṟa ; 17.

The fertility of the Cēra country:

The Cēra Nādu was a very prosperous country. The exuberance of its natural wealth was unsurpassed. The lush vegetation of the mountains, the irrigational potentialities of the rivers, the abundant yields of the seas were the enviable gifts lavished on Cērā country by mother Nature. Kumaṭṭūr-k-kaṇṇaṉār acclaims the wealth of the country in his song included in the second decad of the Patirruppattu.[32] Pālai-k-kautamaṉār who is the author of the third decad of Patirrupattu is all admiration for the fertile land of Cērās. He paints a beautiful picture of the maids who flattened the rice, rested their wooden pestles on the plaintain trees, and got into the rice fields, which were laden and bent with their golden harvest, to pluck the 'Vākai' blossoms (Ipomeqe acquatica).[33] According to the same poet, the harvest of sugarcane in the country was not seasonal, but went on throughout the year.[34]

There are certain stanzas included in the anthology of Muttoḷḷāyiram which extol the glory of the Cērās and their territory. They claim, that the Cēra Nādu was more extensive than the wide sky, that the Chieftains who paid tribute to the Cērās were more numerous than the stars twinkling therein, and their glory can be compared to the grandeur of the moon.[35]

Let us listen to another Tamil poet whose beautiful song embellishes the Muttoḷḷāyiram collections. He describes a natural scene thus: "The lovely purple blossoms of the water-lilies open out spilling their fragrance around. Their deep red colour is mistaken for fire by the innocent frightened birds. They enfold their dear little ones within their protective wings. The Cēra Nādu knew no other alarm than the fear of these birds".[36]

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32. Patirrup; II; 3: 1-9.
33. „ III; 9: 1-3.
34. „ III; 10: 11.
35. P. Tiraṭṭu: 1476. (Muttoḷḷāyiram: 108) (Kazhagam Edition).
36. P. Tiraṭṭu: 829. (Muttoḷḷāyiram: 110) (Kazhagam Edition).

Cekkiḷār, the celebrated author of Periyapurāṇam, sings that the Cēra Nādu was renowned for the fertile yields of the land and the mountains and the sea.[37]

Pālai-k-kautamaṉār in his poems included in the third decad of the Patiṟṟuppattu has also complimented on the plenteous and never failing rainfall of the country over which the Cērā king Palyāṉai-c-celkeḻu Kuṭṭuvaṉ ruled.[38] The land was very fertile due to the ever flowing rivers; and the people had never experienced the wretchedness of war.[39]

The sixth decad of Patiṟṟuppattu provides a vivid description of the rich Neytal (coastal region) lands. Kākkaipāṭiṉiyār Nac-ceḷḷaiyār is the author of these ten poems. They were sung in praise of the Cērā monarch Āṭukōṭpāṭṭu-c-Cēralātaṉ. These poems are noted for the beauty of the expression and the wealth of information they contain.

The description of the sea, the Neytal blossoms, the harbour and the stretches of sandy beach, where the screw-pine flowers were shedding their fragrance, is a unique and ever fresh contribution of Nac-ceḷḷaiyār to the Tamiḻ literature.[41] The fact, that there was a greater growth of the seedlings along the furrows made by the plough than on either side has not escaped her keen observation.[42] The merchandise of the king came from the mountains and the sea.[43]

Kapilar has sung the glory of Celvak-Kaṭuṅkō and his country.[44] The description of the Cērā country from the pen of Aricilkiḻār is remarkable. The ninth decad of Patiṟṟūppattu contains a graphic description of the people living on the slopes of

37. P. Puṟāṇam; Viṟanmiṇṭa Nāyaṉār Purāṇam: 1.

38. Patiṟṟup; III; 4: 24–30.

39. Patiṟṟup; III; 8: 13–14.

40. „ VI; 1: 14–17.

41. „ VI; 5: 3–6.

42. „ VI; 8: 17–19.

43. „ VI; 9: 14–15.

44. „ VII; 6: 14–20.

the Kolli hills. These happy folk plunge into their festivities and regale themselves with the pleasant toddy fermented in the scorched bamboo tubes even as the rich people feast themselves with the pulp of the huge jack fruit shaped like a drum.[45]

"The rain does not fail. It comes regularly during the expected season. The buck and the roe romp in happiness. The birds sing and the beetles chirp on the boughs of the trees which are laden with luscious fruits. The delicious roots are there to be plucked and tasted. The cattle have had their fill of the succulent grass, The Cērā country knows no famine as there is no scarcity of cereals and pulses".[46]

Such is the fertility of the Cērā country ruled by the Cērā monarchs as evidenced in the Tamil literature. Let us now look into the achievement of the Cērā kings as depicted in Patiṟṟppattu and patikams.

Peruñcōṟṟu utiyaṉ cēralātaṉ

Cēralātaṉ has given the dynastic name of the Cērā monarchs. He is presumed to be the earliest of the sovereigns who ruled over the Cēra Nādu with Vañci of Kuṭṭa Nādu as his capital. There have been kings with the names Neṭuñcēralātaṉ and Peruñcēralātaṉ. But the name Cēralātan appears to have been common among them. Some scholars are of the opinion that the kings bearing the name Cēralātaṉ descended from one Cēramāṉ Ātaṉ.[47]

It is now accepted that Peruñcōṟṟu utiyaṉ, the Cērā king is the hero of the first decad of the Patiṟṟuppattu. But the poems included in this decad have been lost unfortunately. It has not been possible to learn more about him. The second verse in Puṟanāṉūṟu by Murañciyūr Muṭinākarāyar relates to him. This king is reported to have fed the Pandava and the Kaurava armies in the great

45. „ IX; 1 : 19–24.

46. „ IX; 9 : 1–7.

47. Thiru Auvai S. Duraisami Pillai; Paṇṭai-nālai-c-Cērā Maṉṉar Varalāṟu, p. 61.

Bharata war. The old commentator on Puṟanāṉūṟu has made the following remarks; "The monarch has been feeding both the armies of the Pandavas and the Kauravas throughout the war till all the Kauravas fell on the battle-field".[48] On the basis of this comment, some critics have inferred that Peruñcōṟṟu utiyaṉ belonged to Maha Bharata age and that Murañciyūr Muṭinākarāyar was a contemporary of his.[49] But some scholars have demurred. Dr. M. A. Durairangaswami is of the opinion, that "utiyaṉ cēral became famous for his grand feast never by feeding the 'aivar' and 'iraimpatiṉmar' during the Bharata war". His contention is, that "in their memory he performed rites as a matter of religious duty during the Cankam period".[50] Dr. P. Arunachalam opines, that "the practice of—the performance of ancestor worship—only by the male descendant, came to be generally accepted by the people of Tamilnad during the Sangam period".[51] Utiyaṉ Cēralātaṉ, the grand father of Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ, could not have lived as early as the age of Maha Bharata. Therefore, they would rather presume that the Utiyaṉ Cēralātaṉ who fed the armies of the Maha Bharata war was different from the Utiyaṉ, the father of Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñcēralātaṉ and the grand father of Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ.[52] It will not be out of place here to suppose, that the allusion to a Utiyaṉ Cēral by Māmūlaṉār in his verse included in the Akanāṉūṟu[53] relates to the Utiyaṉ of Maha Bharata age. But scholars are not also wanting to disbelieve the very incident of a Tamil king feeding the armies of the warring North Indians. They postulate, that the warriors of the Maha

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48. Puṟa; 2; 13–16.

49. Thiru M. Raghava Ayyangar; Cēra Vēntar Ceyyut Kōvai; p. ix.

50. Dr. M. A. Duraiarangasami; article on 'Did Utiyaṉ Cēral belong to the Mahabharata period?' in the proceedings of the first International Conference seminar of Tamil studies, Vol. I, pp. 297 and 298.

51. Dr. P. Arunachalam; article on 'Peruñcēṟṟu Cēralātaṉ' in the book 'Proceedings of the first International Conference seminar of Tamil studies, vol. I, p. 313.

52. Thiru M. Raghava Ayyangar; Cēra Ventar Ceyyut Kōvai p. ix.

53. Aka; 233: 7–10.

Bharata war were wheat-eaters, that a king belonging to the rice-eating South could not have supplied them with rice ration, and that, therefore, it is nearer to probability to presume that the Cērā king supplied rice to the mourners who took part in the obsequies performed to the warriors who were killed in the hostilities, or that the king was pleased to feed the actors in a Drama who staged the Maha Bharata war.[54]

Prof. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar was one of those who held this view. According to him, there was a practice among some Tamil kings to offer feasts and entertainment to the actors in a Drama of Maha Bharata war, and that, it was not incorrect to presume that Cēraṉ Utiyaṉ too could have done the same honour, but with due respect to this erudite scholar, we have to differ from him. The Sakkiyar and the Kathakali kuttus were innovations of the later Cērās when Kerala began to assume an identity distinct from Tamil Nādu.[55] They were unknown in the days of antiquity when the Bharata war was fought. It is therefore fallacious to assign by conjecture an earlier period like that of Peruñcōṟṟu Utiyaṉ to a practice which came into vogue later. To listen to discourses on Maha Bharata[56] and to make endowments for their conduct was a custom with the wealthy lords of the medieval age and even still later periods in South India.[57] It was never heard of during the Sangham age.[58] This will clearly show, that the view of Prof. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar is untenable.

There is yet another view nourished by some scholars that some of the ancestors of Cēraṉ Utiyaṉ died in the Bharata war, and that this Cērā king performed the annual obsequies to them and had fed large number of invitees to these religious rites.[59] This too is ridiculous.

54. Thiru P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar; History of the Tamils; p. 492.

55. Thiru K. P. P. Menon; History of Kerala; Vol. IV. p. 525.

56. A. R. No. 540 of 1922.

57. Annual Report of Madras Epigraphy for 1910. p. 96.

58. Thiru Auvai Duraisami Pillai; Paṇṭai-nālai-c-Cērā Maṉṉar Varalāṟu p. 70.

59. Thiru K. G. Sesha Aiyar; Cēra king of the Sangham period p. 7.

Auvai S. Doraisami Pillai, a scholar of repute, after discussing the pros and cons of the question concludes as follows:— "Peruñcōṟṟu Utiyaṉ obtained victories in Koṅku Nādu. In commemmoration of those victories, he fed a very large number of people. It is an accepted practice of Tamil king as the 'Peruñcōṟṟu nilai' is an act which comes under what is known as 'Puṟattiṇai'. Evidently Muṭināka rāyar who glorified the king's large scale feeding in his puṟam verse found superb comparison to it in a similar act of charity performed by a previous monarch during the Maha Bharata hostilities".[60] We can therefore safely affirm, that Peruñcōṟṟu Utiyaṉ Cēralātaṉ was a person different from Utiyaṉ Cēraṉ, the father of Imayavarampaṉ.

The Utiyaṉ Cēral referred to by poet Māmūlaṉār[61] is the hero of the first decad of Patiṟṟuppattu. The patikam to the second decad provides us with information on his marriage with Nalliṉi, daughter of Veḷiyaṉ, the chief of Vēḷirs. Of the two sons who were born of them, the elder was Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñcēralātaṉ, the hero of the second decad, and the younger was Palyāṉai-c-Celkeḷu Kuṭṭuvaṉ, the hero of the third decad.

Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñcēralātaṉ

He is also called by another name 'Cēramāṉ Kuṭakkō Neṭuñcēralātaṉ. The second decad in which he figures as the hero, was composed by Kumaṭṭūr-k-Kaṇṇaṉār. This Cērā king had two wives. One was Cōḻaṉ Maṇakkiḷḷi, mother of Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ and the other was Veḷāvikkōmāṉ Padumaṉ Devi mother of Kaḷaṅkāy-k-Kaṇṇi Nārmuṭi-c-Cēral.

The military Campaigns

There are certain islands lying to the north-west of Cēra Nādu, adjoining to the shores of Koṅkāṉa Nādu stretching along the Arabian sea. They were ruled over by a race called, the 'Kadambars' whose totem was the 'Kadamba' tree (Authrocephalus cadamba). They are said to be 'Kuṟumbars' owing

60. -do- 71.

61. Aka; 65.

62. Patiṟṟup; II; Patikam : 2-3.

allegiance to the Chiefs of Tuḷu Nādu. They were pirates of the high seas; and they carried on piracy with the mercantile vessels belonging to Greece and other maritime countries. This information is furnished by Pliny, the Greek historian (80 A.D.).[63] The export trade of the Cērās was affected as a consequence, and began to dwindle. King Neṭuñcēralātaṉ with a powerful fleet interrupted them, dealt a mighty blow at them which crippled their might and even went to the extent of raiding their islands and destroying their 'Kadamba' totem. The poet Kumaṭṭūr–k–Kaṇṇaṉār sings the glory of the victory and the sea-power of the monarch in more than one place.[64] This heroic adventure is alluded to by the poet Māmūlaṉār in his verses included in the anthology of Akanāṉūṟu.[65]

Kumaṭṭūr-k-Kaṇṇaṉār, in his poetic composition on Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñcēralātaṉ records another historical event in which the king's heroic exploits went to the extent of inflicting a crushing defeat on some Aryan kings. The Patikam of the second decad also discloses this incident.[66] It is not clear, who these Aryan kings were. In those days, it was the custom to call the Telungars and Kannadars as 'Vadavars' as they were in occupation of the territories to the north to Tamil Nādu.[67] Those who had been living beyond the territories were designated as 'Aryans' by the Tamils of the Sangham age. The Cērā kings were in alliance with the Satakarnis of the Deccan. This can be easily inferred from the valuable help rendered by them to the Cērās, when the latter took military expeditions to North India for various purposes which included fetching a block of stone from the Himalayas for carving out an image of Kaṇṇaki, the Pattiṉi goddess. Hence we can safely presume that Kumaṭṭūr-k-Kaṇṇaṉār's reference relates to the successful military campaign Imayavarampaṉ took out against certain Aryan chiefs.

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63. Mayilai Seeni Venkatasami, ; Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ, p. 8.

64. Patiṟṟup ; II : 1 : 12–16. 7 : 4–7. 10 : 2–5.

65. Aka ; 127 : 3–4 ; 347 : 3–5.

66. Patiṟṟup ; II ; Patikam ; 7.

67. Mayilai Seeni Venkatasami, Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ ; p. 10.

As a mounment of his heroic exploits in the north, Imayavarampaṉ etched his royal insignia of a bow on the rocks of the Himalayas. We gather this information from the poems of Māmūlaṉār and Paraṇar included in the Akam anthology.[68] A reference to this incident is also contained in the Patikam of the second decad[69] and in Cilappatikāram.[70] The Patikam provides us with further details on this particular exploit of the Cērās. It informs us that Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñcēralātaṉ captured some Yavanas, poured oil over their heads, bound their arms behind their backs and obtained from them, as booty, enormous riches including diamonds and ornaments. The early commentator of Patiṟṟuppattu makes the following remarks on this practice of the olden days: "This ancedote refers to the military convention of those days, that of pouring oil on the heads of the defeated chieftains, binding their arms behind their back and obtaining gold ornaments and diamonds as ransom." These incidents are narrated in the Patikam, but, in none of the poems contained in the second decad are they mentioned. It is a matter for inference, that this war with the Yavanars should have been waged after Kumaṭṭūr-k-Kaṇṇaṉār composed the second decad.

Who are these Yavanars? Scholars differ in their answer to this most debated question. According to one, the Yavanars were rulers who had occupied the stretch of the Western coast of the Deccan. Saka Yavanars were also ruling over the Vindhya regions in the Deccan and had been always at war with the Satakarani kings. Imayavarampaṉ was on friendly terms with the Satakaranis and had rushed to their succour whenever they were subject to threats of invasion from the Yavanars. It is this incident that has been chronical in the ninth decad, as remarkable achievement of an ancestor of Ilañcēral Irumporai.[71]

There is a different view expressed by others, that Neṭuñcēralātaṉ inflicted a crushing defeat on the Yavanars who had

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68. Aka; 127 : 3–5; 326; 16–19.

69. 'அமைவரல் அருவி இமயம் விற்பொறித்து'

70. Cilap; 23; 81–82; 25; 1–2.

71. Patiṟṟup; IX : 8 2–6.

colonised the port-towns of the Cēra Nādu.[72] But Mayilai Seeni Venkatasami disagrees with this view as untenable in his erudite treatise on Cēra Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ.[73]

We learn from Patikam, that Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñcēralātaṉ reigned for fifty-eight years. A poem in the Puṟam anthology indicates that he died in action against the Cōḻā monarch Vērpakraṭakkai Peruviṟar Kiḷḷi.[74] The battle was fought at 'Pōr'. There was a huge loss of men and elephants and horses on both sides. Both Cērā and the Cōḻā kings lay wounded on the battle-field for a long time before they died. Poet Kaḷāttalaiyār who sang the events of the battle, was a witness to the events which occurred on the battle-field. His poem is classified as falling under the 'tuṟai' (theme) 'Maṟak-Kaḷa-Vaḻi'. This poet also mentions the death of Neṭuñ-cērālātaṉ in another verse.[75] We are indebted to the poet Paraṇar also, for an account of the distressing spectacle of the wounded kings who lay dying wounded on the battle-field.[76] From these incidents. we can assume that Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñcērālataṉ, Cōḻāṉ, Vēṟpakṟaṭakkai Peruviṟaṟkiḷḷi, Kumaṭṭūr-k-Kaṇṇaṉār and Kaḷāttalaiyār were all contemporaries.

Palyāṉai-c-Celkeḻu-Kuṭṭuvaṉ

He is the younger brother of Imayavarampaṉ. While Imayavarampaṉ ruled over Kuṭanādu with the port-town, Māntai as his capital, his brother Kuṭṭuvan ruled from Vañci. The latter fought several battles and extended his territories. That portion of the country which lay to the east of Kaṭanādu, on the West of the southern hill ranges, was a stretch of a sandy plain called Pūli Nādu. The people who belonged to that country were

72. K. N. Sivarāj Pillai, The Chronology of the Early Tamils, p. 117.
    K. G. Sesha Aiyar, Cērā kings of the Sangham Period, p. 18.
    K. A. Nilakanta Sastri; A. Comprehensive History of India, Vol. II, p. 519.
73. Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ, pp. 13–14.
74. Puṟa; 368.
75. Puṟa; 62.
76. Puṟa; 63

called the 'Pūḷiyars'. Wild elephants in hundreds roamed about in the southern hill ranges. The 'Pūḷiyar's were experts in capturing elephants and training them for war. Therefore, the army of Kuṭṭuvan̠ had a huge elephant division. This is the reason, why Kuṭṭuvan̠ added the honorific title, 'Palyān̠ai-c-Celkeḻu' to his name.

In those days, there lived an old chieftain called, 'Mutiyar' in the region of the southern mountains now called by the name 'Ān̠amalais'. That portion of the mountain range which ran to the north of Kuṭṭa Nādu was called, 'Pāyal Nādu'. It was under the rule of certain minor Chiefs. Often, they undertook nuisance raids into Kuṭṭa nādu. Their capital was Akappā or Araṇ. It was situated in the north of the dense jungles called, 'Umparkkāṭu'. It was surrounded by a high rampart and a protective wood. Palyān̠ai-e-Celkeḻu-Kuṭṭuvan̠ took out punitive expeditions against these depredators and forced them to submit to his might and pay tributes. In his subjugation of Umparkkaṭu, the Cērā monarch was ably assisted by 'Mutiyar'. Not satisfied with his capture of Umparkkāṭu, the Cērā crossed over to Akappā triumphantly and reduced it. He put the surrounding areas to sword and fire and returned to his capital after placing 'Mutiyar' in charge of these territories. We learn about this heroic episode from the Patikam of the third decad and Patiṟṟup-pattu.[77] There is also a reference in this decad to the victories the Cērā king scored over the chiefs of Koṅgu Nādu.[78] The elephant division of his army took a major part in the battles.[79] He possessed such a large contingent of elephants that he stationed them in a line, which stretched from the West sea (Arabian sea) to the East sea (Bay of Bengal), and had the water from both the seas fetched on them within a single day for his anointment rites.[80]

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77. Patiṟṟup; III; 2: 21–27

78. „ III; 2: 15–16.

79. „ III; 9: 13–14.

80. II Patikam,

'கருங்களிற் றியானைப் புணர்நிரை நீட்டி
இருகடல் நீரும் ஒருபகல் ஆடி'.

Palyāṉai-c-celkeḻu-Kuṭṭuvaṉ was very proud of his victories: He offered worship of Koṟṟavai, the goddess of the Ayirai hills.[81]

We have noted before, that the third decad consists of song composed by Pālai-k-Kautamaṉār, a Brahmin poet. The king was so generous and magnanimous that he left the choice of the gift to the poet himself. Kautamaṉār consulted the elders of his community and obtained from the king necessary provisions sufficient to perform the great 'yagas' (Sacrifices). While performing the tenth yaga, Pālai-k-Kautamaṉār and his wife suddenly vanished from the sacrificial site. The Patikam of the third decad furnishes this information.

A Brahmin ascetic of Cōḷa Nādu, by name, 'Parācaraṉ', hearing that Kautamaṉār and his wife attained the Swarga (Salvation) during the yaga performed by them with the assistance of the Cērā king, approached the king for a similar aid for himself. Cilappatikāram which contains this episode states further, that the King offered the Brahmin all the facilities for performing the yaga and showered on him gifts of gold and silver.[82]

We further learn from the Patikam and also from the early commentator, that the king Palyāṉai-c-celkeḻu-Kuṭṭuvaṉ reigned for twenty-five years, and, when his court Purohit Neṭumpāratāyaṉār renounced the world and repaired to the forest for doing penance, the king also renounced his throne and leaving his queen, accompanied the Purohit to the forest.[83]

Kaḷaṅkāy-k-Kaṇṇi Nārmuti-c-Cēral

When Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñ-cērālātaṉ was ruling over Kuṭa Nādu, his son, Nārmuṭi-c-cēral by name, born of Paduman-Devi,

81. -do-

82. Cilap; 23; 62-73.

83. II Patikam.

'ஒடுங்கா நல்லிசை உயர்ந்த கேள்வி
நெடும்பார தாயனார் முந்துறக் காடுபோந்த
பல்யானைச் செல்கெழு குட்டுவன்'

was occupying the throne of Kuṉṟa Nādu that lay to the south-east of Kuṭṭa Nādu. He was in very cordial relationship with the descendant of 'Vaṇṭaṉ' alias Paḷaiyaṉ and 'Mutiyar' who were living in Kuṉṟa Nādu. The territory which lay to the north of Kuṉṟa Nādu was called, 'Koṇkāṉa Nādu': Beyond Koṇkāṉam on the north extended Tuḷu Nādu, and on the east, the Puṉṉādu. Naṉṉan, the Vēḷpula king ruled over Koṇkāṉam, Kankan over Puṉṉādu, Kaṭṭi over the regions south of Puṉṉādu, and Pūṉṟuṟai, the lands further south.

Naṉṉaṉ, held sway over the regions of the Ēḷilmalai in Koṇkāṉa Nādu. The Kosars were occupying Tuḷu Nādu.[84] This territory was also under the suzerainty of the Naṉṉaṉs. We learn from a poem in Akanāṉūṟu, that the Kosaras were living only along the Coast lands of Tuḷu Nādu.[85] Some scholars believe, that the Kosars did not belong to the Vēḷir tribe, that they constituted independent clans such as 'Atiyars' and 'Maḷavars', that they lived mostly in Tuḷu Nādu, Koṅgu Nādu and Paṉṟi Nādu and that they had never settled in any territory establishing over it a government of their own.[86]

There is an anecdote related by the early commentator of Patiṟṟuppattu as to how this king earned the addition, of the honorific title of 'Kaḷaṅkāy-k-Kaṇṇi Nārmuṭi' to his name.[87] When the king was about to be enthroned, the usual crown and the head-garland were not available readily at hand; they had to be improvised with the fibre and the fruits of the Kaḷṅkāy plant respectively. Hence the king came to be known as

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84. Aka; 15.

85. Aka; 113.

86. Thiru Auvai S. Duraisami Pillai; Paṇṭai-nālai-c-Cērar Maṉṉar Varalāṟu, p. 128.

87. "களங்காய்க் கண்ணி நார்முடியென்றது களங்காயாற் செய்த கண்ணியும் நாராற் செய்த முடியுமென்றவாறு. தான் முடிசூடுகின்ற காலத்து ஒரு காரணத்தால் முடித்தற்குத்தக்க கண்ணியும் முடியும் உதவாமையிற் களங்காயால் கண்ணியும் நாரால் முடியும் செய்து கொள்ளப்பட்டன வென்றவாறு"

'Kaḷaṅkay-k-Kaṇṇi Nārmuṭi-c-Cēral'. Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri differs from this view of the Commentator,[88] though it has found a modified support in Mahavidwan M. Raghava Ayyangar.[89] Another scholar would infer that the crown and the head-garland should have been either broken up or lost, while the wearer Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñcēralātaṉ lay wounded on the battle-field along with the Cōlaṉ Vērpakṟaṭakkai Peruviṟaṟ Kiḷḷi awaiting death, and that, therefore his successor had to be satisfied with the improvised royal insignia.[90] Later during his reign, Kaḷaṅkāy-k-Kaṇṇi Nārmuṭi-c-Cēral is said to have adorned himself with a golden and gem set diadem.[91]

During his glorious rule over Cēra Nādu Nārmuṭi-c-Cēral captured portions of Koṅgu Nādu and incurred thereby the envy and enmity of Neṭumiṭal Eliṉi, the chief of Takaṭūr in Koṅgu Nādu. Neṭumiṭal Eliṉi met the Cēraṉ in a bloody battle with the help of the Pāṇṭiyā king, but sustained a defeat in it.[92]

Next Nārmuṭi-c-Cēral marched against Naṉṉaṉ of Tuḷu Nādu, as the latter had seized the northern parts of Cēra Nādu, Pūḻi Nādu and certain portions of Koṅgu Nādu. The war that ensued was a prolonged one. Finally, Nārmuṭi-c-Cēral came out successful. He recovered Pūḻi Nādu from Naṉṉaṉ, carried a successful campaign into Tuḷu Nādu and captured Viyalūr, Koṭukūr, Naṟavūr, etc. The engagements at Kaṭampiṉ Peruvāyil and Vākaip Peruntuṟai proved to be bloody battles. Finally, Naṉṉaṉ was defeated and killed in action. These episodes are narrated in the fourth decad of Patiṟṟuppattu[93] and in a composition by Kallātar in Akanāṉūṟu.[94]

The descendant of Naṉṉaṉ paid homage to the Cērā kings accepting their suzerainty. He, therefore, came to be called,

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88. A comprehensive History of India, Vol. II, P. 521 footnote.
89. Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ, pp. 12–13.
90. -do- p. 20.
91. Patiṟṟup; IV; 9: 14–17
92. „ VI; 2: 10–11.
93. „ IV; 10: 13–11.
94. Aka; 199: 18–24.

'Nannan Utiyan'. This fact is borne out by a composition by Paraṇar in Akanāṉūṟu.[95]

The fourth decad of Patiṟṟuppattu, in which Kaḷaṅkāy-k-Kaṇṇi-Nārmuṭi-c-Cēral figures as the hero, was sung by Kāppiyāṟṟu-k-Kāppiyaṉār. He was granted forty hundred-thousand (40,00,000) gold coins and some territories in Naṉṉaṉ's country, as reward for this song.[96]

Kaḷaṅkāy-k-Kaṇṇi-Nārmuṭi-c-Cēral reigned for twenty-five years.

Cēraṉ-Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ

Of all the kings of the Sangham age, Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ stands foremost in military strength, heroism, fame and name. He is also praised by a learned Tamil scholar, as the Asoka of the South.[97] Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ was the son of Imayavarmpaṉ Neṭuñ-cēralātaṉ by his second wife. He succeeded Kaḷaṅkāy-k-Kaṇṇi Nārmuṭi-c-Cēral to the throne. Even as a young prince, he had taken part in the heroic wars waged by his father and brother and had tasted success. It is seen that Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ was chosen to lead the naval expeditions taken out by Neṭuñ-Cēralātaṉ against the pirates of the western sea.

Naval expedition

The information regarding Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ's capture of the Kadambar's islands and the destruction of their totem tree is contained in several poems of the Sangham age.[98] It is further affirmed by Paraṇar in his composition, included as the fifth decad in the Patiṟṟuppattu and by the earlier commentator on Patiṟṟppattu.

Mayilai Seeni Venkatasami remarks that Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ should be deemed to have led the naval expedition only at the command

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95. -do- 258 : 1-3

96. Patikam to the fourth decad.

97. Thiru M. Raghava Ayyangar; Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ, p. 198.

98. Patiṟṟup; II : 1 : 2-16; 2 : 2-3; 7 : 4-7; 10 : 2-5.

of his father, as Paraṇar, who the contemporary of himself and his father has stated that Ceṅkuṭṭuvan̲ was the first chief to have undertaken naval engagements.[99] The scholar sustains his case with the information contained in the second decad.[100] This poem credits both the father and the son with the destruction of the Kadamba totem.

There are allusions to the naval prowess of Ceṅkuṭṭuvan̲ in Cilappatikāram.[101] Paraṇar pays a glorious tribute to Ceṅkuṭṭuvan̲ in his poem included in Akanān̲ūr̲u.[102] He says that the king had to embark on naval encounters, as he had no opponents left on land. He compares Ceṅkuṭṭuvan̲ to a fisherman who hunts for sharks on the high seas.[103] The remarkable and brilliant successes achieved by the king obtained for him, the honorific additions to his name; 'Kaṭal Pir̲akkōṭṭiya Ceṅkuṭṭuvn̲' and 'Cōramān̲ Kaṭalōṭṭiya Vēlkelu Kuṭṭuvan̲'.

Conquering the surrounding territories

When his brother Kaḷaṅkay-k-Kaṇṇi Nārmuṭi-c-Cēral engaged Nannan of Tuḷu Nādu on the south, Ceṅkuṭṭuvan̲ led an attack on him along the sea-coast. The final outcome of these expeditions was great success to the Cēras. Ceṅkuṭṭuvan̲ captured Viyalūr and Koṭukūr of Koṇkān̲a Nādu. According to Māmūlan̲ār, Viyalūr was included in Tuḷu Nādu.[104] The capture of Viyalūr and Koṭukūr is related in the Patikam of fifth decad of Pattrir̲r̲up-pattu. There is an allusion to the reduction of Viyalūr in Cilappatikāram.[105] There are further references in this great epic to the valuable assistance rendered by Ceṅkuṭṭuvan̲ to his cousin Takaṭūr-er̲inta Peruncēral Irumpor̲ai, when the latter captured Koṅgu Nādu in the face of a combined engagement against him by the Koṅgu Nādu Cōla, and Pāṇḍiyā armies. In these conflicts,

99. Aka; 127 : 35 ; 347 : 3–6. Cilap ; 28 : 135–136.
100. Patir̲r̲up; II; 1 : 12–16.
101. Cilap; 29 : Ucal vari ; 30 : 12–14.
102. Aka; 212 : 15–20.
103. Patir̲r̲up; V : 8 3–4.
104. Aka; 97 : 11–13.
105. Cilap; 28 : 114–115.

Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ obtained signal victories, inflicting a crushing defeat on Poṅkaḷar, Kaṭṭiyar and Kaṅkar who held sway over territories surrounding Tamiḻakam.[106] Paṅkalam was the frontier of Tamiḻakam, west of Vēṅkaṭa (Tirupati) hills. These remarkable military successes obtained by Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ prove his great prowess in the art of war.

Mōkūr battle

The fiercest of battles fought by Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ was the Mōkūr clash. Mōkūr was a town situated near Madurai in Pāṇḍya country. This is said to be the present Tirumōkūr, a town famed for the great Vaishnava temple.[107]

The chief of Mōkūr was a commander in the Pāṇḍya army. There was enmity between him and the chief of Aṟukai. In one of the conflicts between them the Mōkūr chief scored a victory over his adversary. Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ, a friend of Aṟukai chief, hastened to his succour. In a battle that ensued, the Mōkūr chief suffered an ignominous defeat. Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ humiliated the Mōkūr chief by felling his totem Vēmpu tree (Azadirachta indica), fashioned a war drum out of its wood and returned home triumphantly. There are very many eulogistic references to this victory in Patiṟṟuppattu,[108] and in Cilappatikāram.[109] We learn from these references, that the Mōkūr Chief had secured the military assistance of certain Vēḷ chieftains too. The patikam also mentions that the Cēra king had the long hair of the wives of Palaiyaṉ, the Mōkūr chief cut and twisted into a rope with which is secured and carried the totem tree he had mowed down in the battle.

Help rendered to Kiḷḷivaḷvaṉ

After the death of the Cōlā king Karikālaṉ, his son Kiḷḷivaḷavaṉ attempted to succeed to the throne. Nine princes, who

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106. -do- 25 : 152–155 ; 25 : 156–159.

107. Mayilai Seeni Venkatasami, Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ ; p. 31.

108. Patiṟṟup ; V : 4 : 10–17. 9 : 7–17.

109. Cilap ; 27 : 124–126.

were descendants of the Cōḷā dynasty, opposed him and fomented internal feuds and rebellion. Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ led an army to the assistance of his brother-in-law 'Kiḷḷi Vaḷavaṉ' and inflicted a severe defeat on all the nine claimants to the throne.[110]

Expeditions to the North

Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ carried war twice to the very territory washed by the river Ganges. It is said, that his first raid was organised, when he wanted to have his mother given a bath in the sacred river,,[111] and the second attack had to be launched when he marched to the Himalayas to have a suitable block of rock hewn out for carving out on idol for Kaṇṇaki to be installed in his kingdom.[112]

The Patikam to the fifth decad mentions the episode of the attempt of the king to fetch a stone from the north; but there is no mention of it anywhere in the text of Patiṟṟuppattu. The reason for it, is not far to seek. The second raid on the plains of the Ganges should have been undertaken after Paraṇar composed his song which forms the fifth decad of Patiṟṟuppattu.

The Patikam makes also a curious allusion to Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ presenting his son to the poet Paraṇar, as a reward, in royal appreciation of the poet's song included as the fifth decad. Paraṇar was also granted the revenue of Umparkkādu, for his enjoyment.[113]

The Patikam states that Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ reigned for fifty-five years.

Āṭukōṭpāṭṭu-c-Cēralātaṉ

He is the hero of the sixth decad of Patiṟṟuppattu and the younger of the two sons of Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñcēralātaṉ by his wife Vēḷāvik-Kōmāṉ Devi, He succeeded to the throne of

110. -do- 118-128; 28: 116-117.
111. -do- 25: 160-165.
112. -do- 27: 1-13.
113. V Patikam.

Cēra Nādu after his elder brother Kaḷaṅkāy–Kaṇṇi–Nārmuṭi–c–Cēral.

The tract of land that lay in between Koṇkāṉa Nādu and Tondai Nādu, was called, 'Dandariniyam'. Certain disputes arose between the chiefs of Dandaraniyam and the Cērās. This Cēra king raided that country, and seized and carried away the cattle and sheep belonging to it. After triumphant return to Tondai, a town in Cēra Nādu, he divided them amongst the soldiers, scouts and the astrologers who took part in the raid. As the sheep counted more than the cattle seized, the king earned the name 'Aṭukōṭpāṭṭu-c-Cēralātaṉ'. The Patikam furnishes us with this information.[114]

The Satakarnis started a series of raids into Kuṭa Nādu. Cēralātaṉ was determined to punish them for their misdeeds. He marched an army against Kuṭa Nādu. The descendants of Naṉṉaṉ were then ruling over Koṇkāṉa Nādu. They welcomed Cēralātaṉ with tributes of the products of the forests, the mountains and the sea, and gave him military aid, as well. Cēralātaṉ was able to defeat the Satakarnis in the battle and forced them to pay him tribute.[115] With the help of the Brahmin priests of the land, Cēralātaṉ performed a big yaga (sacrifice) and endowed on the priests, a whole village in Kuṭa Nādu.[116]

Cēralātaṉ returned triumphantly to Vañci, his capital. The tract of land lying impounded between the Kolli hills and the river Cauvery, was under the occupation of Chieftains, called 'Maḷavars', at that time. They began to raid the Southern territories ruled over by Vēḷirs. Cēralātaṉ wanted to put an end to this disreputable conduct of the Maḷavars. He knew them to be expert horsemen; and wanted to win them over by a strategic plan. He surrounded them with his men and supplied them plentifully with delicious rice, cooked with flesh and dhall chutney

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114. VI Patikam.

115. Patiṟṟup; VI; 9.

116. VI Patikam.

which they relished most and thereby acquired their love and friendship. In their later campaign against their enemies, he also helped them with his men and resources.[117] The Patikam refers to this incidence.

During this military undertaking, Cēralātaṉ strengthened the battlements of Koṅgu-Vañci a fortified town stretching on the banks of the river, Āṉporuṉai (Ambiravathi) and installed one of the Cēra chiefs, as the ruler over the territory. The later Cōḻas captured the town and changed its name as 'Rajarajapuram'. The Cōḻa inscriptions refer to the place as "Rajarajapuram, that is, Koṅku vañci of Naṟaiyaṉūr Nādu'.[118] The present Dharapuram of Coimbatore District was called, 'Rajathiraja Chaturvethi mangalam' in those days.

Cēralātaṉ was a benevolent sovereign and protected his subjects as he would protect his own children.

This monarch reigned for thirty-eight years. He is the hero of the sixth decad of Patiṟṟuppattu, whose author is Kākkai-pāṭiṉiyār Nac-Ceḷḷaiyār, a great poetess of his times. The king was so much pleased at her scholarship that he presented her with gold for making bangles and one hundred thousand Kanam gold pieces. He honoured her further with a seat by his side. This magnanimity, on his part, shows only, that the king honoured scholarship and erudition and sought out persons for accepting his gifts and titles.[119]

Celva-k-Kaṭuṅkō Vāḻivātaṉ

The great poet Kapilar, a Brahmin by birth, who spoke nothing but the truth[120] and a scholar unsurpassed in describing 'Kuṟiñci-t-tiṇai',[121] has sung in praise of this king in the seventh decad of Patiṟṟuppattu.

117. 'மழவரைச் செருவிற் சுருக்கி'

118. A. R. No. 146 of 1920.

119. Patiṟṟup; VI ; 5 : 10-11,

120. 'பொய்யா நாவிற் கபிலர்'; 'புலனழுக்கற்ற அந்தணாளன்'

121. 'குறிஞ்சி பாடக் கபிலன்'

Ponnāni, Pālaikkādu (Palghat), Vaināḍu (Vaḷḷuva Nādu and Ērnādu at present included in Kerala State, once constituted into what was called Poṟai Nādu. A portion of it, the Kuṟumbar Nādu, was a small territory called, 'Māntaram' surrounding a mountain of the same name. The chieftains who ruled from Māntaram as their capital, were called, 'Māntaram', 'Māntaram Poṟaiyar' and 'Māntarañ Cēral Iṟumpoṟai'. The earliest of these chieftains mentioned in the older compositions in Tamiḻ, was Māntaram Poṟaiyar Kaṭuṅkō.[122] Paraṇar praises him as very generous in offering gifts to the needy.[123] He never swerved from the path of 'Aṟam' (righteousness or Dharma).[124]

Kaṭuṅkō appears to have been succeeded by Oḷvāḷ Kōpperuñ Cēral Irumpoṟai. He is the first monarch to have extended the Poṟai Nādu upto Karuvūr, in the East. When the Cōḻā king captured 'Maḻa Nādu' on the northern banks of Cauvery, this Kōpperuñ-cēral is reported to have sought engagement with him with swords, defeated in the combat, and captured Eastern Koṅgu Nādu and Maḻa Nādu which extended upto the Kolli hills on the northern banks of the Cauvery. Later, he entered into a friendly treaty with the Cōḻās, changed the name of a town on the banks of Āṉporuṉaiyāṟu' into Karuvūr (the name is still retained). He also changed the name of 'Pōrūr' in Maḻa Nādu into Muciṟi. Prof. Auvai Duraisami Pillai is also of the opinion, that the inscriptions[125] of the middle ages mention the name of Karuvūr as 'Vañci Mānataram that is 'Karuvūr'. He is of the opinion, that the river 'Āṉ Poruṉai' later came to be called, 'Amarāvati' and that 'Karuvūr and 'Muciṟi' became famous as the creations of the Cēra Kings.[126]

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122. Thiru Auvai S. Duraisami Pillai; Paṇṭai-nālai-c-Cērā Maṉṉar Varalāṟu p. 184.

123. Aka; 142; 4–7.

124. Patiṟṟup; IX : 10 : 12–13.

125. A. R. No. 166 of 1936–37; A. R. No. 335 of 1927–28.

126. Thiru Auvai S. Duraisami Pillai; Paṇṭai-nalai-c-Cērā Maṉṉar Varalāṟu, p. 186.

Karuvūr ēriya Olvāl Kōpperuñcēral Irumporai ascended the throne. The seventh decad refers to him as 'Neṭu nuṉ Kēḷvi Antuvaṉ'. He is the chief of the Vēḷirs who lived in Vēṇādu. He married Poṟaiyan Devi, the daughter of Orūtantai and had a son, Celvak-kaṭuṅkō Vāḻiyātaṉ by her.

Celvak-kaṭuṅko Vaḻiyātaṉ was a great prince. He showed deep interest in literary pursuits even as a boy. He was always found in the company of eminent scholars. He exercised very great patience even when others talked ill of him. He earned the approbation of wise men of his land in all that he had done. He made his children serve elderly folk.[127]

A Satakarni King raided Tamil Nādu with the help of certain Aryan Chiefs. Hearing this, Kaṭuṅkō obtained military assistance from the Cōla and the Pāṇḍiyā kings, marched north, engaged the Satakarni in a siege, scattered his armies and won a glorious victory. Kapilar refers to this victory in Patirṟuppattu.[128] Kaṭuṅkō was well versed in military tactics and was an expert in capturing and demolishing ramparts. Some of the proud soldiers of his army took a vow, that they would not cook and eat their food, unless and until they had taken the ramparts, and therefore, they had thrown their cooking utensils into the beseiged fort as being useless till then.[129]

He was famous in war and was also engaged in peaceful pursuits for the well-being of his subjects. He performed several yagas with the help of the Brahmin priests.[130] He made an endowment of an entire fertile village to a Vishnu temple.[131]

The generosity of this monarch knew no bounds. He was so much pleased with the great poet Kapilar, that he gifted away

127. Patiṟṟup; VII; 10 : 20–22.

128. -do- VII; 3 : 11–12.

129. -do- VII; 8 : 5–7.

130. -do- VII; 10 : 17–19.

131. VII Patikam.

to him all of that land which could be seen and pointed out by the poet from the top of the hill called 'Naṉṟā'.[132]

Celvak-kaṭuṅkō Vāḻiyātaṉ reigned for twenty-five years. When he was engaged in a battle at Cikkal to assist a Pāṇḍiyā king he was wounded in his chest due to a lance-attack by his enemy and died gloriously on the battle-field. He was called by the later poets, as the 'Celvak-kaṭuṅkō' who died at Cikkal'.

Takaṭūr eṟinta Peruñcēral Irumpoṟai

Koṅgu Nādu was always famous for its luxuriant forests and verdant pastures. Cattle and sheep were raised in the land. The poets have praised the Koṅgu people as people gifted with cattle wealth. A portion as of Koṅgu Nādu was under the reign of Atiyamāṉ Eḻiṉi. The present Dharamapuri was called, 'Takaṭūr in those days. The town now called, 'Atamaṉ Kōṭṭai' was originally called, 'Atiyamāṉ Kōṭṭai'.

Peruñ-Cēral Irumpoṟai was the son of Celvak-kaṭuṅkō Vāḻiyātaṉ. During his time, the Cērā hegemony extended upto Takaṭūr. Koṅgu Nādu was under the reign of Atikamāṉ Neṭumāṉ Añci. He is the son of Atikamāṉ Neṭumiṭal Añci. Neṭumiṭal Añci had already suffered a defeat from the hands of Kaḷaṅkāy-k-Kaṇṇi Nārmuṭi-c-Cēral. Now he met with defeat and death in a battle with Naṉṉaṉ of Tuḷu Nādu. He was succeeded to the throne by Atiyamāṉ Neṭumāṉ Añci. Peruñ-Cēral Irumpoṟai raided Takaṭūr which belonged to him for reasons not clear. Perhaps, Atikamāṉ Neṭumāṉ Añci was much concerned about the growing authority of the Cērās over Koṅgu Nādu. Evidently, he sought to block this growing menace to his country. He rallied around him the chiefs, of the 'Āyar' (cowherds) tribes and Koṅgu Vēḷirs. Among the 'Āyar chiefs there was one called 'Kaḻuvuḷ'. He took advantage of the death of Celvak-kaṭṅkō at Cikkal, and was no more afraid of his might. He pounced upon Kolli-k-kūṟṟam that once belonged to him and shifted his capital to the northern banks of the River Cauvery. The Cērā chief

132. VI Patikam.

who was ruling from 'Koṅgu-vañci' (Dharapuram) as the deputy of the Cerā monarch was appraised of the impudence of 'Kaḷuvuḷ' and he passed on the information to Peruñcēral Irumporai, the successor to Celva-k-kaṭuṅkō. Irumporai mustered a huge force and struck at the heart of Kolli-k-kūṟṟam. Some of the Vēḷirs in the army of Kaḷuvuḷ were defeated and they joined the ranks of Cēramāṉ. Kaḷuvuḷ had to surrender to the Cērā king. But the heroism, exhibited by Kaḷuvuḷ impressed the magnanimous king very much. Therefore, the king restored the chief to all his former possessions and honour, swore friendship with him and returned to his Nadu with the tributes of elephants besides gold and silver obtained from him. The eighth decad contains an account of these encounters.[133] Eḻini was killed in the fight and Takaṭūr was ravaged and burnt. The signal success at Takaṭūr earned for the king, the title, 'Takaṭūr eṟinta' which was prefixed to his name.

The Cōḷā and the Pandiyā kings suffered an inglorious defeat at the hands of the Cērā monarch.[134]

A poet sang the glory of the Takaṭūr won by the Cērā king in his brilliant composition, known as 'Takaṭūr Yāttirai'. Unfortunately, only a few verses of the work are available, some of them as reference made by Naccinār-k-kiniyar, in his commentary on Tolkāppiyam, Puṟa-t-tiṇai Iyal; and some are found included in the anthology called 'Puṟa-t-tiraṭṭu'. The eighth decad makes mention of the fact that Cēramāṉ conducted several yagas and persuaded his old purohit to renounce the world.[135]

There is an interesting episode in the life of Peruñ-Cēral which demonstrated his supreme respect for scholarship and erudition. Mōci-kīraṉār, a great poet, trudged a long distance to the palace of the king and was so much exhausted that he fell asleep on a cot not knowing that it was the one on which the royal drum would be kept. Irumporai, instead of punishing

133. Patiṟṟup; VIII : 1 : 17–18; 8 : 8–9.

134. VIII Patikam

135. Patiṟṟup; VIII : 4 : 1–2.

him for the sacrilege, actually fanned him that he might sleep soundly and rest.[136]

The eighth decad of Patirruppattu, is from the pen of the poet, Aricil Kiḷār. He was qualified to be appointed as a minister to Peruñ-Cēral Irumporai. In the Patikam of the eighth decad, from which we learn that Aricil-kiḷār refused to accept a most generous gift of the king and queen, which included all the wealth that the palace contained, nine hundred thousand Kāṇam gold and the throne, saying, that he would always beg while persuaded to accept the post of a Minister to the king.

Takaṭūr erinta Peruñceral Irumporai reigned for seventeen years.

Iḷañcēral Irumporai

After Peruñcēral Irumporai, his son, Cēramāṉ Kuṭa-k-kōc cēral Irumporai, was crowned the king of Cērā Nādu. But views differ on his relationship to the deceased king. According to Mayilai Seeni Venkataswamy, he was the son of Kuṭṭuvaṉ Irumporai, the younger brother of Peruñcēral Irumporai and a contemporary of Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ. There is yet another presumption that he was the son of an elder cousin of Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ.[137]

Poets have called him, 'Polan-tēr-p-poraiyaṉ' and 'Pal-vēr-poraiyaṉ'. Iḷañ-Cēral-Irumporai figures as the hero of the ninth decad of Patirruppattu. The poet, who composed the decad, was Peruṅ-kuṉrūr Kiḷār. On one occasion when the poet approached Irumporai for gifts, the king unnecessarily delayed his favours. The poet felt aggrieved at the delay and to express his disappointment he sang two poems.[138] But the poet subsequently realised, that he had mis-judged the king. He realised his mistake, when he found that the generous king without telling him of his intentions, had despatched princely gifts to the poet's residence

136. Puṟa; 50.

137. Mayilai Seeni Venkatasami, ; Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ, p. 40.

138. Puṟa; 210; 211.

and had houses and a whole town built for him.[139] Peruṅ-kuṉṟūr-Kiḷār got thirty two thousand Kāṇam gold as a gift for singing the ninth decad.

Patiṟṟuppattu contains a reference to Iḷāñ-cēral Irumpoṟai winning a victory over a Cōḷā king. [140] This decad informs us, with poetic exaggeration of course, that, in a fierce lance-attack launched by the Cērā army, the men of the Cōḷā army got routed thoroughly, and consequently they had to the throw their lances and flee from the battle-field, showing their backs to the foe like cowards. It adds further, that the number of lances so cast down, counted more than the number of villages Celva-k-kaṭuṅkō gifted to Kapilar. There is no mention in Patiṟṟuppattu, of the name of the Cōḷā king who suffered the defeat. But, the Patikam indicates that his name was 'Pottiyāṇta Cōlaṉ'.

The Patikam proceeds to tell us, that Iḷañ-Cēral invested a fort called, 'Ainteyil' defeated the Cōḷā and the Pāṇḍyā kings, Vicci and Iḷampaḷaiyaṉ Māṟaṉ and obtained enormous tributes from them. He is reported to have distributed generously to the poets and men in want at 'Vañci Mūtūr', all that he had brought. He built a 'Catukkam' (square) at Vañci and invoked the grace of the gods called, 'Bhudars' there. He had also caused religious rites and rituals conducted to propitiate these gods. The occurrence of this event is confirmed by Iḷaṅkōvaṭikaḷ, in his immortal epic, Cilappatikāram.[141]

Iḷañcēral occupied the throne for fourteen years; but he died according to Iḷaṅkōvaṭikaḷ before Cēṅkuṭṭuvaṉ secured the piece of rock during his North Indian invasion and installed Kaṇṇaki's idol sculptured out of it.[142]

In the preceding pages, we have discussed the exploits of the Cērā kings.

139. IX Patikam.

140. Patiṟṟup ; IX : 5 : 3-4.

141. Cilap ; 28 ; 147-48.

142. Cilap ; 28 : 147-150.

2. POLITICAL CONDITIONS OF THE CĒRĀ COUNTRY UNDER THE CĒRĀS

The kings were held in high esteem by the people in the Sangham Age. Mōcikīranār, a Sangham poet, proclaims that neither paddy nor water is the life of the people, but the king is 'life' of all the living things on earth.[1]

Peruñcorru Utiyan Cēralātan is considered to be the earliest of the rulers of the Cērā dynasties. Imayavarampan Neṭuñcēralātan is the hero of the second decad of Patirruppattu. He is the son of Utiyan Cēral. Some scholars differ from this view.[2] Ever since the commencement of this century, scholars have raised the question, 'Were the Cērā monarchs subject to the patriarchal or matriarchal line of inheritance?' Thiru M. Srinivasa Ayyangar has affirmed in his erudite treatise 'Tamil Studies', that the Cērā kings belonged to the 'Marumakkaṭṭāyam' (matriarchal system). He remarks thus: "But at any rate it is evident that he (Mr. Kanakasabhai) has forgotten the fact that succession in the Kerala Country was according to Marumakkaṭṭāyam line".[3] Prof. S. Somasundara Bharathiar also affirms in his paper on 'Cērar Tāya-murai', (the order of succession among the Cērars) that the Cērās had adopted the Marumakkaṭṭāyam from very ancient times and has adduced several reasons in support of his claim. On the other hand, Prof. M. Raghava Ayyangar would contend that the Cērās had been following the patrilineal succession only.[4]

Thiru T. V. Sadasiva Pandarathar, who has made a life-long study of lithic inscriptions of South India, has discussed this moot question in his 'Patirruppattu and the Patikams' thoroughly and concludes as follows:

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1. Pura; 186: 1–2.
2. Dr. M. A. Durairangasami; Utiyan Cēral Bharatha Kālatbavanā? p. 11.
3. Tamil Studies; pp. 272–273.
4. Arāyccit-tokuti; pp. 339–398.

'It is necessary to presume that the 'Vēḷāvikkōmāṉ Devi' mentioned in the Patikams of the fourth and the tenth decads of Patiṟṟuppattu was none other than the daughter of Vēḷāvikkōmāṉ Patumaṉ mentioned in the sixth patikam. We learn from the inscriptions of the Cōḷas, that among the wives of the Cōḷa kings, mention has been made of some bearing the names Pāṇṭiyan's daughter as Teṉṉavaṉ Mā Devi, Pañcavaṉ Mādevi, Cēraṉ's daughter Cēraṉ Mādevi and Vāṉavaṉ Mādevi. The word 'Devi' usually means a wife. But in the medieval times, it denoted a daughter also. This fact is gleaned from the Patikams of Patiṟṟuppattu and the inscriptions of the Cōḷa kings."[5]

We shall now turn to what Prof. T. P. Meenakshisundaranar says, in his learned introduction to the scholarly edition of Patiṟṟuppattu by Prof. Auvai Duraiswami Pillai. He states as follows:

'The Putra Kameshti Yaga is, it may be suggested, mentioned in Poem No. 74 by Arisilkizhar, a Non-Brahmin Poet......This reference to Putra Kameshti is very important. The question is very often raised whether the Cēras who ruled over a country where the Marumakkaṭṭoyam or matriarchal succession now reigns supreme, were following the law of Makkal Tayam or patriarchal succession, as their colleagues the Cōḷas and the Pāṇṭyas did, or were following the law of Marumakkal Tayam, as followed by the Kings of Malayalam today. The wife of the King under the Marumakkal Tayam is never called the Queen. In Patiṟṟuppattu, every Cērā King is praised as the husband of the Chaste consort. But, this does not help us decide the issue raised. The Putrakameshti poem, however, conclusively proves, it was the son of the consort that becomes the King, thus establishing beyond doubt the patriarchal succession of these Kings. There is one other difficulty, for the Patikam speaks of the mothers of these Kings as 'Vēlāvikkōmāṉ Pathumaṉ Dēvi' etc. It is this kind of expression that has really created the confusion. 'Dēvi' ordinarily means wife, this phrase will then denote a wife of a Vēlir, chief Pathuman etc. How can the wife of a chief be also

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5. Ilakkiya Araycciyum Kalveṭṭukkaḷum, pp. 143–144.

the wife of the Cēra king. This leads some scholars to assume, that the succession was matriarchal where the mother of the ruling prince is never the wife of a king. But as this theory runs counter to the explicit statement of the Putra Kameshti poem, one has to explain the word according to Thiru T. V. Sadasiva Pandarathar as meaning 'daughter', a usage made clear by such phrases as Cēraṉ Mā Dēvi, Pañcavan Mā Dēvi, all wives of Cōḷas and not of Cēras or Pāṇṭyās. Or Cēraṉ Mā Dēvi etc., may be an elliptical short-hand expression for 'The Great Cōla Queen the daughter of the Pāṇṭyās or Cērā'. Names like Cēntaṉ Kōṟṟaṉ or Kīraṉ Koṟṟaṉ etc. mean Koṟṟaṉ son of Cēntaṉ or Kīraṉ. Therefore Pathumaṉ Mā Dēvi may mean the queen, the daughter of Pathumaṉ. One is justified in referring to the usage of the Imperial Cōḷa inscriptions in view of the close kinship that exists between the Meykkirtis of the later Cōḷas and the Patikams of Patiṟṟuppattu, as explained by Thiru T. V. Sadasiva Pandarathar in his short introduction to the present commentary".[6]

A critical appreciation of this introduction leads to consider that the learned professor has thus given a quietus to the much debated question regarding the succession of the Cērā kings.

The Final word

The early commentator of Cilappatikāram makes mention of the name of 'Iḷaṅkō-Vēṇmāḷ' as denoting the queen of Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ.[7] The phrase 'Vēḷāvi-k-Kōmāṉ Patumaṉ Dēvi can be expanded to mean 'Patumaṉ Dēvi, daughter of Vēḷāvi-k-Kōmāṉ'. Iḷaṅkōvaṭikaḷ, the ascetic author of Cilappatikāram, while narrating the birth and parentage of his elder brother, Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ refers to him as the son of Cēralātaṉ, "whose word was law over the territories sprawling between the Himālayās and Kumari", by the daughter of the Cōḷa King.[8] The wives of the Cērā Kings were entitled to be crowned on the throne along with their husbands.

6. Foreword to Auvai Duraisami Pillai's Edition of Patiṟṟuppattu; pp. 6–7.

7. "இளங்கோ வேண்மான்; பெயர்; 'நன்னன் வேண்மான்', 'உதியன் வேண்மான்' என்பன போல"—சிலப்பதிகாரம்; 25;5.

8. Cilap; 29 : 1 Uraippāṭṭu-maṭai.

Their male children had the right to succeed to the throne Atikamāns, the scions of the royal Cērā line had been following the patriarchal descent. The inscriptions relating to the Cērā lineage, afford sufficient proof that Cērās had also been following only the patriarchal system. All these facts drive us to the inescapable conclusion, that the Cērās had adopted the patriarchal order of descent.

Mr. Justice K. G- Sesha Ayyar of the High Court of Travancore, who had published his work on the 'Cērā kings of the Sangam period' in 1937, has made an emphatic assertion, that the Cērās had never followed the matriarchal system of succession and that it was quite contrary to historical evidence to say that the nephew succeeded to the throne of his uncle. This is what he says: "It is quite certain that succession among Sangham Cērās was not regulated by Marumakkat thayam law...... reading the relevant portions, therefore, carefully we see there is no warrant for saying, that there is any trace in them to suggest, that the succession was not linear, from father to the son but was collateral from uncle to nephew".[9]

Tamil Polity and Society

Dr. M. Arokiaswamy declares in his treatise on 'The classical age of the Tamils as follows: "The Tamil polity of those days was monarchical, but society had not departed from its tribal mooring and it was society governed by kings and chieftains who warred quite often among themselves. But Society itself was a fairly peaceful society well versed in the art of manufacture and indulging in extensive trade with enough leisure and inclination to practice fine arts, like poetry and music. The religious attachment of those people were not marred by bigotry but qualified by an uninhibited tolerance.........The civilisation of the Tamils of the Sangam Age had reached a stage which prevented its being completely dominated or affected by any foreign culture including that of the Aryas".[10]

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9. Cera kings of the Sangham period, pp. 71-74.

10. The Classical Age of the Tamils. p. 5.

Law and Justice during the reign of the Cērā kings

We find a judicial commandment including in Patiṟṟuppattu which considers anger, lust, expression of an over abundance of regard and kindness, fear, falsehood, excessive love and infliction of vindicative punishment are all clogs on the wheel of Dharma.[11]

Pālai-k-kautamaṉār eulogises Palyāṉai-c-Celkeḷu Kuṭṭuvaṉ's reign as a just and impartial one, and hence his country enjoyed an abundance of wealth and an unfailing bumper harvest, and that his subjects were leading a happy life.[12]

Characteristics of the Cērā Kings

Poet Kumaṭṭūr-k-Kaṇṇaṉār has all praise for the political and military might of the Cērās. It is according to him, as much a difficult task to value their potentiality as it is to subject the four elements, earth, water, air and sky to any measurement. In one of his compositions included as the second decad to Patiṟṟupattu, he warmly compliments the Cērā King as follows: 'The monarch shines bright in his domains even as the sun, the moon and the planets illuminate the skies. His generosity is comparable only to that of Akkuraṉ of the days of the Bharata War. He adorns the garland of 'tumpai' flowers (usually worn by warriors, while engaged in a war, as a mark of their valour) and destroys his rancorous enemies. He will not swerve an inch from his fearless resolution even though the very god of death may encounter him. His veteran warriors serve as a protecting shield to his subjects. He is a good husband to lovely women. He ploughs through the enemy ranks with his elephant force, and, at the same time figures as the royal hero of the lays of the wandering women minstrels ".[13]

The fame of the Cērā towers high up to the skies as the form of Neṭiyōṉ (Tirumāl) has soared before.[14] The Cērā King had the magnanimity to pardon his enemies and restore them

11. Patiṟṟup; III; 2:1–4.
12. -do- III; 1:30–31.
13. Patiṟṟup; II; 4 : 1–17.
14. -do- II; 5 : 39.

to their possessions, if only they would accept his suzerainty and pay him tributes.[15]

Kumaṭṭūr-k-Kaṇṇaṉār praises Palyāṉai-c-Cel-Keḻu Kuṭṭuvaṉ as the worthy descendant of a long line of impartial and just rulers. The poet states, that the following virtues characterised the meritorious administration of the Cērā Kings. "They were free from such moral and administrative stains as unbridled rage, procrastination, lavishing of excessive kindness on undeserving persons, getting chicken-hearted at the might of the enemy, expression of unlimited compassion to the associates and inflicting vindictive punishments on wrong doers." Pālai-k-Kautamaṉār states that the ancestors of Palyāṉai-c-celkeḻu-Kuṭṭuvaṉ pursued always the path of virtue and righteousness, sternly put down the internal feuds and violence, never coveted what was not theirs, possessed immaculate wisdom, never wavered from their set course of impartiality and equity, were very loyal to their loving wives, divided their revenues among the needy and the indigent, keeping a portion for their own enjoyment, evaded disease and senility and carried on the administration according to the principles laid down in the Shastras.[16]

We are beholden to the poet Kāppiyāṟṟu-k-kāppiyaṉār for a charming and intimate word picture of the Cērā king, Kaḷaṅkāy-k-kaṇṇi Nārmuṭi-c-Cēral. This monarch is resolute in urging his subjects to lead a virtuous life. He inspires them, with a spirit of devotion to offer worship to Tirumāl.[17]

The poet further extols Kaḷaṅkāy-k-kaṇṇi Nārmuṭi-c-Cēral as having rehabiliated fallen men and has thus established a lasting name and fame for himself.[18]

In another song included in the fourth decad, the same poet speaks of the commendable philanthropy of this King in having restored his subjects from the miserable depths of adversity to

15. -do- II : 7 : 1-3.
16. -do- III :2 : 5-11.
17. -do- IV : 1 : 6-9.
18. -do- IV : 1 : 13-14

the heights of prosperity. The nobility of the king's character was well known throughout the four corners of the earth, says the poet. HIs impartiality. his extra-ordinary valour exhibited in leading the vanguard of his army, his striking terror in the hearts of his foes and inflicting death on them, his distribution of the booty among his camp followers including the Pāṇars (minstrels), and his gift of wealth to reach the limit of satiety are all glorified by the poet in this song,[19]

The Cērā king would harass his foes, but, at the same time, rain gifts of gold and gems on the indigent bards and others in want. He is wise but humble. His fame has gone upto the skies.[20]

Kāppiyāṟṟuk-kāppiyaṉār could find no end to the glorification of Kaḷaṅkkāy-k-kaṇṇi Nārmuṭi-c-cēral, the hero of his song (the fourth decad). He acclaims him as one who has developed the wealth of his land that had already been saturated with abundance. The King is an inexhaustible treasure to the wandering minstrels, he is the Pāṇars' resort, he is an endearing husband to his beautiful wife, and undaunted lion among the veterans of his army.[21]

Kāppiyāṟṟu-k-Kāppiyaṉar assesses the character of his hero Kaḷaṅkāy-k-kaṇṇi Nārmuṭi-c-Cēral looking at him from yet another angle; the king never enjoys his acquisitions by himself. He distributes them to others too; he is not self centred; but lives for his subjects.[22]

Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ, the hero of the fifth decad, is presented to us, as the loving husband of a beautiful lady, Iḷaṅkō Vēṇmāḷ.[23] It is a tribute paid by the poet Parāṇar to the King's fidelity and affection for his wife. The King is as much fond of fighting

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19. -do- IV : 2 : 1–7.
20. -do- IV : 7 : 3–7.
21. -do- IV : 8 : 3–10.
22. -do- IV : 3 : 13–16.
23. -do- V : 2 : 7.

on the battle-fields as he is of bestowing generous gifts on his enemies. He has therefore earned the admiration of even his adversaries.[24] This commendable feature in him, is the product of his education and culture.

King Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ had never learnt to keep for himself anything that he liked most; but he found it a great pleasure to offer it to the young minstrels who warmly applauded him for this rare quality in him. He was affectionate and dedicated to his wife and friends but was unbending to his foes.[25]

The poet compares the king to the confluence of three great rivers as, in his country, the produce of the hills and forests, the yield of the seas and the harvest of the lands are found in plenty.[26]

It is not easy to conquer the Cērā King. His enemies found it to their cost. They want to please him. They despatch to him as tribute a number of vessels which were the pride of their country.[27]

Kākkai-p-pāṭiṉiyār Nac-Ceḷḷaiyār, the author of the sixth decad, gives a delicate and intimate feminine touch to the encomium she has paid to Āṭukōṭpāṭṭu-c-Cēralātaṉ, the hero of the poem included as the sixth decad in the Patiṟṟuppattu anthology. She addresses him as the husband of the most cultured and wise lady, and the generous patron of the learned and noble people.[28] He is also praised as a protective shield to the warriors of his army who eat with relish, rice cooked with meat, dressed white, as the chief of the people of Kuṭa Nādu, and as the lord of chariots flying victorious flags on them.[29]

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24. -do- V : 3 : 29–31.
25. -do- V : 8 : 7–9.
26. -do- V : 10 : 6–7.
27. -do- V : 10 : 12–16.
28. -do- VI : 5 : 1.
29. -do- VI : 5 : 8–9.

Āṭukōṭpāṭṭu-c-Cēralātaṉ has re-established many famished families, has served as the protecting armour to the fighting men of his army, has towered high as the king of all valiant kings and has the magnanimity to protect those who sought him for succour.[30]

The hero of Kapilar's poem is Celvak-kaṭuṅkō. He credits the King with many virtues. Celvak-kaṭuṅkō would bend his knees to none but the 'Pārppārs'. He has no respect for the sentiments of anybody but his intimate friends. He will expose his broad chest smeared with scents only to be embraced by women but never to his foes. The character of the soil may change, but the King never broke his plighted word.[31]

Kapilar extols the king as the great leader of Warriors who fought even-handed battles, who served as an armour to the heroic men of ranks and who is a treasure for the indigent and the needy. Celvak-kaṭuṅkō is a loving-husband of Cērā Mā Dēvi decked with choice ornaments, the guardian of the wandering minstrels, a dispenser of gifts to bards, and the possessor of a broad chest decorated with golden garlands.[32]

The bodies of the men killed in action against him pile up against the skies. The land of the enemy is reduced to poverty for lack of man-power. The Cērā king hastens to the rescue of the land and rehabilitates the families struck with heavy loss in the hostilities.[33] Celvak-kaṭuṅkō Vāḻiyātaṉ's ancestors are also credited with unswerving virtues in war and peace.[34]

This great Cērā monarch would not lie even for a quip. He is wise enough not to mind the back-biting of his enemies. His manly chest is adorned with golden ornaments. He is the proud husband of a shy, artless, chaste lady possessing a fragrant

30. -do- VI : 9 : 7–10.
31. -do- VII : 3 : 1–7.
32. -do- VII : 5 : 10–12.
33. -do- VII : 9 : 10.
34. -do- VII : 9 : 11–12.

lustrous fore-head. He obtains success in many engagements on the battle-fields and causes delight to Koṟṟavai, the goddess of victory. He is humble before men of wisdom who are his friends; but he is relentless to his foes: He would have his children perform their duties to their ancestors. He never fails in his own royal duties.[35]

Aricil-kiḻār, the author of the eighth decad speaks of the several attributes, his hero, 'Takaṭūr—Eṟinta—Peruñ Cēral Irumpoṟai was gifted with. The king preserved the glorious traditions of his royal ancestors. He may be compared to a minister, wise and cultured and well-versed in state craft and whose moral duty is to offer competent advice to the king on the administrative matters. His enemies are not aware of these admirable qualities on account of their conceit.[36]

Aricil-kiḻār affirms that the king cannot be compared to others, be they wise-men or fools, but others may seek comparison with the King.[37]

The immense wealth the King owned, his fearlessness, his munificence and hospitality transcend anything common.[38]

In the thick of the battle the Cērā king does not care for his own life; and even in the midst of his adversaries he sets no boundary for his generosity.[39]

Peruñcēral Irumpoṟai rises higher and higher in the estimation of this poet. Aricil-kiḻār is profuse in his praise for him. The King claims kinship with great men of culture and wisdom. At the same time, he does not ignore the supplication for attention coming from the poor people. His refined tongue can never utter a falsehood. He suffers no dishonour to offend his might.

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35. -do- VII : 10 : 11–22.
36. -do- VIII : 2 : 3–7.
37. -do- VIII : 3 : 1–3.
38. -do- VIII : 3 : 11–13.
39. -do- VIII : 9 : 1–2.

The garlands which adorn his valiant chest are crumpled in embracing beautiful women.[40]

The King has achieved an ever-lasting fame and has acquired an education of lasting value.[41]

The generosity, shown by Iḷañcēral Irumpoṟai in bestowing gifts on the bards, and his military-might are spoken of in glowing terms by the poet Peruṅkuṉṟūrkiḻār in this poem, the ninth decad of Patiṟṟuppattu. The wealth of the King is undiminished though he rains unlimited gifts on the minstrels. In spite of several engagements on the battle-field, he has had with his enemies his army has not shrunk in size.

The fame of the King is beyond assessment though many poets have praised him for his munificence, impartiality righteousness, nobility of character and heroism. His wealth is ever on the increase with the addition of the territories from his vanquished enemies.[42]

The tender heart of the Cērā king is more transparent than the cool, clear waters of the river 'Vāṉi' carrying the drifting pieces of the fragrant sandal wood.[43]

The rule of Iḷañcēral-Irumpoṟai's reign is noted for its impartiality and equity. He is revered not only by all his subjects, but also by the saints and sages who have earned a place in the Kingdom of God.[44]

The Cērā monarch can be compared to water for the softness of his heart. His diplomatic talent is vast as the skies. His treasury is undrainable as the waters of the ocean.[45]

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40. -do- VIII : 9 : 3–8.
41. -do- VIII : 10 : 16–17.
42. -do- IX : 2 : 12–16.
43. -do- IX : 6 : 9–13.
44. -do- IX : 9 : 8–13.
45. -do- IX : 10 : 15–18.

Hitherto, we have been going through the literary evidence furnished by the poets of Patirrupattu speaking to the height of culture and to that of the administration efficiency reached by the Cērā monarchs.

We shall now take up a study of the military might of the Cērās.

Divisions of army:

We learn from the Patirruppattu poems, that the Cērās possessed a vast army consisting of the Infantry, the Cavalry, the Elephantry and Chariot divisions. The men of their army were heroes of many exploits. They were held with awe and admiration not only by the people in Tamil Nādu but also by aliens. Pālai-k-Kautamaṉār gives us a glowing account of the four divisions of the Cērā army and declares that a good army should include prancing horses, decorated elephants, invincible chariots hung with painted screens and warriors always anxious and ready to fight.[46]

Kāppiyāṟṟu-k-Kāppiyaṉār, the author of the fourth decad, gives us a vivid description of the Cērā armies. He says, that Nārmuṭi-c-Cēral inflicted a terrible defeat on the warriors of his enemies who marched on him mounted on sturdy horses with red hued mane, on chariots with flags flowing long and huge fierce elephants with spangled forehead, embellished with golden garlands and facecloth woven in gold.[47]

Elephants:

We shall first see now the elephant division was constituted: The following are the categories of elephants employed in military conflicts:—

1. Retaliative elephants.[48]
2. Fighting elephants.[49]

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46. -do- III : 2 : 17-20.
47. -do- IV : 4 : 4-9.
48. -do- II : 7 : 1-18.
49. -do- III : 1-17.

3. Frightening elephants.[50]
4. Ceremonial elephants wearing golden ornaments.[51]
5. Rutting tuskers.[52]
6. Elephants employed in running errands.[53]
7. Elephants employed in sundry military tasks.[54]
8. Elephants employed in Royal parades.[55]

Apart from these, there were tuskers which were used by the hunters to entice female elephants into captivity. Aricil-kiḻār speaks of animals which resisted fiercely being bound to a fastening post, damaged several poles to which they were secured and charged at the flitting shadows of kites flying above mistaking them for other elephants. Takaṭūr Eṟinta-Peruñ-cēral Irumporai had so many elephants in his army that they formed out wide as did the cattle of the Koṅgars.[56]

The elephant wing of the Cērā army is credited with having crushed the enemies to death by merely crashing into their ranks. Elephants appear to have been well-trained for war purposes. The rutting elephants with swarm of bees buzzing about their heads are mated to the females of their species to cure them of their frenzy. But still these brutes dash about with unsated lust. From this spirited description of the elephants of the royal army, we could easily conceive how mighty the elephant division of the Cēra King should have been.[57]

Peruṅ-Kuṉṟūr-Kiḻār to whom we owe the above depiction, waxes more and more eloquent about the might of the elephant division of the royal army. He says further, that the elephants

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50. -do- III : 5 : 2.
51. -do- IV : 4 : 7.
52. -do- V : 3 : 4.
53. Patiṟṟup; IX; 2:4.
54. -do- IX : 4 :4.
55. -do- IX : 10 : 57.
56. -do- VIII : 7 : 8–12.
57. -do- IX : 2 : 3–6.

will break lose from their fastening posts frightened by the thunders of the rainy season mistaking them for the beating of the war-drums which urged the soldiers to march on to victory.[58]

From this, we have to infer that the elephants were always ready to be roused to action in the wars of the Cērā King, Iḷañcēral Irumpoṟi.

The songs of the Patiṟṟuppattu provide ample evidence to confirm the fact, that the Cērās confidently relied on the elephant wing of their armies to win victories in wars. Two divisions of the Cēra Nādu were called Umpark-Kādu and Vēḷak-Kādu, both the names meaning 'the elephant forests' which shows, that the Cēra Nādu had an abundance of elephant-wealth in their dense forests.

Cavalry ;

We shall now turn to the cavalry division of the Cērā army: The horses employed in battles have been classified under the following categories ;—

1. Horses with thick manes.[59]
2. Fleet-footed horses.[60]
3. Horses with red coloured-manes.[61]
4. Horses with red-coloured manes neighing aloud.[62]
5. Horses that can brave 'even the steel capped arrows aimed at them.[63]
6. Dashing horses.[64]
7. The Kavari horses.[65]

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58. -do- IX : 4 : 1-4.
59. -do- III : 2 : 17.
60. -do- III : 5 : 12; VIII : 10-14.
61. -do- IV : 4 : 4.
62. -do- IV : 8 : 7.
63. -do- VII : 2 : 13. VII : 4 : 9.
64. -do- VII : 9 : 7.
65. -do- IX; 10 : 36.

The horse division of the army was considered as much important as the elephant divisions:

Chariot :

The Chariot division consisted of three categories of the carriages. They are :

1. Chariots draped to flowing curtains.[66]
2. Tall, big chariots.[67]
3. Chariots jingling with cast bell-metal bells.[68]

Infantry :

The Infantry has not been considered a whit less important than the other three divisions.

The Cērā army was best fitted for war. It was vast as a sea ; it was never diminished by loss of men in action. The infantry was classified under the following categories :—

1. The fighting infantry.[69]
2. The infantry that can face even the elephants of the enemies' ranks.[70]
3. The Campaigners.[71]
4. The army sprawling like the wide ocean.[72]
5. The army irreducible in strength though it sustained loss of lives.[73]
6. The army always on movement like the rolling seas.[74]

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66. -do- III : 2 : 19.
67. -do- III : 5 : 13.
68. -do- VI : 2 : 2.
69. -do- II : 1 : 16; III : 3 : 10.
70. -do- VI : 4 : 16-17.
71. -do- VII : 3 : 12.
72. -do- VII : 9 : 3
73. -do- IX : 2 : 13.
74. -do- IX : 10 : 31.

We learn that the fighting men were classified as follows :—

1. Warriors stationed on the defensive.[75]
2. Warriors who carried death into the enemies' camps in lightning engagements.[76]
3. Veterans who had seen many fierce encounters.[77]
4. Military counsellers.[78]

The valiant Cērā monarch marching as the Chief of the army is addressed by various poets, who have sung in praise of the king as follows :—

1. You are the Commander of the army which has destroyed the military strength of your enemies. Though the God of death may swoop down on you excitedly you will not swerve from the dicision you have taken.[79]
2. You are the peasant ploughing into the forces of your enemies.[80]
3. The moment your eyes redden with rage your enemies are all destroyed.[81]
4. Your wrath is comparable to the furty of the god of death.[82]
5. You, Nārmuṭi-c-Cēral, is the proud possessor of many expeditionary forces.[83]
6. You have destroyed the military power of many of your enemies speaking different tongues.[84]

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75. -do- III : 2 : 20.
76. -do- III : 6 : 13–14.
77. -do- III : 10 : 41.
78. -do- VII : 9 : 8.
79. -do- II : 4 : 9–10.
80. -do- II : 4 : 17.
81. -do- III : 7 : 1.
82. -do- IV : 9 : 8.
83. -do- IV : 10 : 16.
84. -do- V : 8 : 10–11.

7. You are not deterred in your military decisions but will march on your enemies and achieve glorious success in the battles even though the 'uṉṉam'[85] tree gets charred showing evil omens, and though your past evil Karmas set your path.[86]

8. You are mighty strong and you always win your wars.[87]

9. None who had dared to oppose you has seen the light of the day.[88]

10. Success in wars is always the topmost of your attributes.[89]

The gallantry of the Cērā forces:

The warriors severe with their swords, the tusks of the elephants, adorned with golden rings, with their swords.[90]

The besiegers swear that they would take no food, unless they capture the fortifications by the following day.[91]

The great heroes of the Cērā armies are the proud possessors of scars of war-wounds on their bodies.[92] In Patiṟṟuppattu the warriors are called 'Cāṉṟōr' (men of culture and virtue).[93]

The besieged army swears that they would not eat their food unless they save their battlements from destruction by the besieging foes.[94]

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85. Uṉṉam tree: A small tree with golden flowers and little leaves which in ancient times, was invoked for omens before warriors proceeded to battle.
86. Patiṟṟup; VII; 1 : 5-6.
87. -do- VII : 2 : 9.
88. -do- IX : 4 : 13.
89. -do- IX : 10 : 24.
90. -do- VI : 1 : 29-30.
91. -do- VI : 8 : 5-8.
92. Patiṟṟup; VII : 7 : 17-18.
93. -do- VII : 7 : 18.
94. -do- VII : 8 : 5-7.

Peruṅ-kuṉṟūr kiḻār pays a glowing tribute to the immense strength and morale of the Cērā army. The elephants keep guard around the military camps; sturdy horses fly fast carrying the fighters spurred by them; the chariots flying long flowing banners tear around in fury. Though under a menacing siege by the enemies, the heroes of the Cērā forces do not get panicky and abandon their post of duty. They are anxious to have the honour of being wounded in action. They would not swerve from the vengence they swore on the attackers. The would not besmirch the fair name of their families by dereliction of duty, but would valiantly strive to maintain it.[95]

The Cērās are proud to exhibit the sutured scars of war-wounds on their broad chests. They would fight wearing 'tumpai' garlands only with the veterans with battle scars, but not with the raw recruits.[96]

Weapons of War:

The army men handled a kind of lance called the 'Eḵkam': It was flung against the enemy.[97] The spear-head of the weapon was always stained with the flesh and blood of the enemy and was stinking. The lance was provided with a sheath made of the tiger's skin.[98] The long shaft was fashioned from a hard-cered wood.[99]

Umbrella:

The royal umbrella was tall and white and it was a symbol of success.[100]

The successful royal flag was flying on the military camp.[101]

War–drum:

References to the war-drum in Patiṟṟuppattu are many. Drums have been carved out of Kadamba tree (Anthocephalus

95. -do- IX : 1 : 6–14.
96. -do- V : 2 : 3–6.
97. -do- II : 1 : 7.
98. -do- III : 4 : 2.
99. -do- IX : 10 : 36–37
100. -do- II : 7 : 13.
101. -do- IX : 8 : 17.

Cadamba)—the token of a vanquished foe.[102] The enemies of the Cērās had not a wink of sleep on account of the fearful thrumming on the kettle-drums in the Cērā army.[103] The Cērā warriors beat their drums and offer to their gods cooked-tiṉai (Setaria italicum) mixed with the blood of animals.[104] The Cērā-might is invincible; the enemy drums are silenced by the victorious beat of the Cērā drums,[105] which sound like the rolling thunder.[106]

War-rituals of the Cērās:

We find no reference to cattle-raids, called veṭci-wars in Patiṟṟuppattu. But the Cērās' raid into the enemy territories is mentioned in a number of places. Before they launched their campaign, the Cērā warriors first worshipped their war-drums offering cooked red-tiṉai mixed with the blood of animals. They rubbed the hairy hide covering the drum with blood. Then they bang on the drums with short sticks. The warriors are roused into action. They will shout their war cries.[107]

It is a proud military practice of the Cērās to have their war-drums carved out of the totem trees of their enemies. Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñ-cēralātaṉ destroyed the piracy of the Kadambars and made his victorious war-drum, out of the Kadamba tree, which served as the totem tree for the Kadambars. He had it covered with the skin of a tiger, killed for the purpose. Worship was offered to the drum which was beaten with short stout sticks by warriors wearing victory rings on their upper arms.[108]

The elephant men sat on the nape of their mount's neck and held in their hands various weapons of war. The king rode on

102. -do- II : 1 : 12–14 ; II : 7 : 5.

103. -do- II : 2 : 7.

104. -do- II : 9 : 6–7.

105. -do- IV : 4 : 10.

106. -do- IX : 10 : 55–56.

107. -do- II : 9 : 6–8.

108. -do- II : 7 : 4–7.

a huge elephant, elegantly decorated with an embroidered lace cloth and golden garlands.[109]

The Cavalry men rode on fast red-maned horses, clasping their arms in their hands.[110]

The Charioteers rode on the Chariots flying long standards.[111]

The infantry consisted of sword-men, lancers, and archers.

From the above information, furnished by the anthology of Patirruppattu, we may presume, that the Cērā army consisted of welltrained war veterans and was equipped with many kinds of deadly weapons.

The advance party of the Cērā army called, 'Kūḷi-p-paṭai' was formed of the pioneers, sappers and miners. They conducted nuisance raids into the enemy territory and harassed the people by plundering and pillaging; and hacked the way for the army that was following. Behind them advanced the column sappers and miners, the swordsmen with swords in tiger-skin scabbards dangling by their side and the phalanx of lancers.[112]

A division of vanguards called, 'tūci-p-paṭai' followed the 'Kūḷi-p-paṭai' closely behind. It consisted of fearless veterans of many wars. They fought their enemies heroically and undauntedly. They put the enemy country to fire and sword. They struck terror into the heart of their foes.[113]

Battles were fought on the plains. The warriors donned 'tumpai' (leucas) garlands. Kings wore 'tumpai' garlands made of gold. The arrows lay hidden in the quivers like serpents in their holes: the bows were bent tense; the sharp tips of the lances were dulled with many a murderous thrust into the attacking elephants.[114]

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109. -do- IV : 4 : 6–11.
110. -do- IV : 4 : 4; IX : 10 : 36–37.
111. -do- IV : 4 : 5.
112. -do- II : 9 : 1–4.
113. -do- II : 3 : 16–17.
114. -do- IV : 5 : 1–5.

That stage of the military siege in which the ramparts of the enemy were surrounded was called the 'Uḷiñai-p-pōr'. During this engagement, the king wore garlands strung of golden 'uḷiñai' (Cerna lanater) flowers. The warriors also donned garlands of fresh cut 'uḷiñai' blossoms.[115]

Before proceeding to capture, the inner walls of the ramparts, the besiegers should first wipe out the detachment of men guarding the surrounding plains. We have a reference, in one of the songs including this anthology, to the reduction of fortifications with tall gates provided with wooden cross bars and with frames for hanging, during peace-times, the quivers of arrows, with protective jungles, with surrounding deep moats and with raised terraces along side the ramparts. These fortifications were called 'Akappā'.[116]

Tiruvaḷḷuvar has prescribed in the first verse[117] of the chapter on 'Iṟaimāṭci' (on kingly excellence) the necessary equipments required for a successful king. He says, that 'he who possesses these six things, an army, people, wealth, ministers, friends and a fortress, is a lion among Kings".[118]

The indispensability of fortifications for the safety of a country can very well be guaged by Tiruvaḷḷuvar's inclusion in his immortal work of an entire chapter[119] on these defensive equipments. He lays down, that a fortification should necessarily consist of a moat filled with perennial crystal-clear water, extensive plains, hills and thick shady forests.[120]

The Cērā monarchs proudly possessed fortifications which conformed to the principle laid down by Tiruvaḷḷuvar.

The gates and doors of the forts were heavy and strong. The heavy doors were rigged with iron nails and were provided

115. -do- VII : 3 : 8.
116. -do- III : 2 : 12-17.
117. Kuṟaḷ ; 381.
118. Kuṟaḷ ; Translation by Rev. Drew and John Lasarus.
119. Kuṟaḷ ; Chapter 75 (Araṇ).
120. Kuṟaḷ ; 742.

with strong wooden cross-bars. The besieging force would goad their elephants to crash against these gate-doors. These trained animals gore a way through the doors with their long strong tusks. Occasionally they may break their tusks. There appears to have been a practice among the winning side to humiliate their vanquished foes by forcing them to cover themselves, as women did, with green leaves strung together and to adorn themselves with the jewels of the weaker sex. The leaves, anklets, balls to play with etc. required for this vindictive ceremony were kept hung ready inside the gate-ways.[121]

We find this practice referred to also by Nakkīrar in Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai,[122] his immortal creation included in the anthology Pattuppāṭṭu. Catapults were installed on the gateways to shoot the arrows on the besiegers.[123] We learn more about these contrivances in Cilappatikāram.[124] Some scholars conjecture that they might have been obtained from the land of the Yavanars and pressed into service in the War-fare of Tamil Nādu.[125]

The moat surrounding the forts were well stocked with ferocious crocodiles.[126] The ramparts were not straight geometrical formations but crooked in structure and were 'sky-high'.[127]

The detachment charged with the task of investing a fortification will at first destroy the protective forests. Then they will establish passage across the deep, crocodile-infested moat. They will engage in free fight with the defenders of the gates and ramparts. After annihilating them, the invaders will swear, that they will not taste their next meal without capturing the fort and will then climb over the walls.[128]

121. Patiṟṟup; VI : 3 : 6–9.
122. Tirumuruku; 68–69.
123. Patiṟṟup; VI : 3 : 7; IX : 8 : 18.
124. Cilap; 15 : 207–218.
125. Prof. T. P. Meenakshisundaram Pillai; Tamiḻā niṉaittu-p-pār; p. 11.
126. Patiṟṟup; VI : 3 : 8.
127. -do- VI : 3 : 9.
128. -do- VII : 8 : 6–7; VI : 8 : 5–7.

The warriors of the Cērā army were proud possessors o battle scars on their bodies, and they wore garlands of coloured blossoms strung in tender shoots of the palmyra trees. Kākkai-pāṭiṉiyār admires their prowess in charging their foes like thunderbolts clasping weapons of offence and defence.[129]

Only the veteran campaigners take part in close fights over the ramparts. After they succeed in capturing the bastioned walls, they don garlands of 'Uḻiñai' flowers and carry out deadly thrusts into the city. They destroy the fierce defence offered to them and put the city on fire and plunder.[130]

We learn from Kapilar that all the four divisions of the Cērā army would be commissioned to action during a siege; that it was impossible for the people inside the fortification to escape their fate in store, and that more and more detachments went to the aid of the attackers at the rear.[131]

We should not think that the ramparts were groaning with frightful war engines only. There were redeeming features too. The inner walls of the fort displayed attractive mural paintings.[132]

The supply of rations to people inside the fort were stopped by the besieging army by setting fire to the villages around the fortifications.[133]

Occasionally the vanquished city will appease the victorious monarch by offering elephants to his army as tribute.[134] Ornaments and articles of gold may also form part of the tribute.[135]

The War Camp:

The invading army used to encamp in the forests around the invested city. Right in the centre of the encampment, the king

129. -do- VI : 8 : 2-4.
130. -do- II : 10 : 18-21.
131. Patiṟṟup; VII : 2 : 1-5.
132. -do- VII : 8 : 16-17.
133. -do- IX : 4 : 14; VII : 2 : 10-12; II : 7 : 2-3; VI : 9 : 11-13; VIII : 1 : 23-24.
134. -do- VII : 6 : 7.
135. -do- IX : 10 : 6-8.

had his tent pitched. It was always well-guarded by vigilant sentries. There were separate camps for each of the four divisions of the army. The poets, minstrels, actors and dancers accompanying the expedition of the King also encamped with him. They were anxious to sing the glorious military achievements of the King and obtain generous gifts in turn, from him. The 'Viralis' (danseuses) and the minstrels sang of the splendid achievements of the King and his army and received presents of valuable gold ornaments.[136]

The King, after winning the war, will ravage the vanquished country. The booty collected would be distributed among the bards and dancers.[137]

The King was grateful to the warriors who had won him the victory. He gave them gifts of costly articles including gold ingots.[138]

The totem tree of the defeated enemy was cut and the war-drum of the successful invaders was fashioned out of its trunk.[139]

The warriors offered worship to the war drums sprinkling red tiṉai (millet) and blood and also giving them a ceremonial bath.[140]

The battle-fields rang with the sound of the bugles and the blowing of the conches which excited the combatants to action.[141]

The beating of the war-drums rose above the din of the war.[142]

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136. -do- VI : 4 : 6–8.

137. -do- IX : 3 : 6–9.

138. -do- IX : 1 : 15–18.

139. -co- II 1 : 12–14,

140. -do- II : 7 : 5–6 ; II : 9 : 5–7.

141. -do- VII : 7 : 5–8.

142. -do- IX : 4 : 1–2; IX : 4 : 15.

Inside the encampment, sweet music could be heard rolling out of many kinds of musical instruments. There was thrumming on the drum too.[143]

In ancient days, Kings fought their wars not for the lust of land, but to maintain the prestige and the integrity of their sovereignty. Even in the thick of the fight, they never for a moment forget the evanescence of the mundane life.[144]

Before launching upon the invasion of an enemy country the King would assess the prospects of his winning the war.[145]

The King believed in omens. The 'uṉṉam' tree would be in blossom, if the King were to meet with success in his compaigns. Otherwise, it would be charred and die. Celva-k-kaṭuṅkō Vāḻiyātaṉ is extolled by Kapilar, as the enemy of the 'uṉṉam' tree.[146]

The King celebrated the victories achieved by him in the campaigns by banqueting the veterans who took part therein and regaled them with sweet music.[147]

It was not uncommon for the men of the defeated army, to be taken into conqueror's service.[148]

Before commencing the martial preparations, the king would offer worship to Koṟṟavai (Goddess of war) of the 'Ayirai' hills.[149]

The Cērā warriors were gallant enough not to flee the battle-field and chivalrous and gracious enough not to pitch their weapons an the defeated men who had taken to flight.[150]

143. -do- IX : 8 : 16–17.

144. -do- IX : 4 ; 16–19.

145. -do- IX : 2 : 8.

146. -do- VII : 1–6.

147. -do- III : 10 : 40–43.

148. -do- VII : 3 : 13–14.

149. -do- IX : 8 : 11–12.

150. -do- VIII : 10 . 8; IV : 1–33

Kumattūr-k-Kaṇṇaṉār has painted a pathetic picture of the grim fate that had visited the once fertile lands of the enemy country ravaged by the Cērā invaders. They had then produced juicy sugarcane; but they are now over-grown with the 'viṭa-t-tērai' trees (thorny trees; dichrostachys cinerea) and the dark 'ūṭai' trees (thorny babul trees—Acadia planiferous). The demoness rides over the goblins with matted hair. The battle-fields are covered with an over growth of vicious 'neruñci' thorns (a small prostrate herb-tribulus terrestris) and dust and stain, and have lost their prestine grandeur. Not a cry of an animal, not a human voice can be heard thereon.[151]

Death and destruction have been measured out to the enemies of the Cērās, while the Cēra Nādu itself enjoyed peace and prosperity without any fear of external attacks. Only the shout of the peasants struggling to lift the wheels of a bullock-cart buried in mire disturbed the quiet of the land. Otherwise, the Cērā country reposed in peace and plenty.[152]

Paraṇar gives us a shocking account of the Cērās crushing the heads of their vanquished enemies with a pounder as they would their pepper berries.[153]

From the realistic depiction of the Cērās' glorious achievements in war by the great poets of Patiṟṟuppattu, we have seen that the Cērā monarchs were as much exalted in their successes in the wars as in the generosity of their gifts to the poets, the minstrels and the needy.

Administrative set-up of the Cēra Nādu:

There is absolutely no indication in Patiṟṟuppattu of the administrative and advisory councils of the Tamils like 'Aimperuñ-kuḻu' and 'Eṇpērāyam' which find mention in Cilappatikāram. Of course, we have occasional references to the ministers and army commanders in this anthology.

151. -do- II 3 : 9–19.
152. -do- III : 7 : 12–16.
153. -do- V : 1 : 20–21.

Sacrificial rituals:

The Cērā King was enthusiastic in performing sacrifices. He listened to the sage counsels of wise men of his court. He never neglected or omitted to perform any of the religious rites prescribed in the scriptures. The sacrifices performed by him evoked the appreciation and gratitude of all the virtuous and righteous people.[154]

Peruñ-Cēral Irumpoṟai persuaded his purohit to renounce the world. He appraised him of the efficacy of penance, which would bestow on him peace of mind, wealth. good children, charitable disposition and a divine character.[155]

The Patikam of the third decad informs us that Palyāṉai-c-Celkeḻu-Kuṭṭuvaṉ performed the great sacrifices at great cost, assisted by learned scholars, so that Pālai-k-Kautamaṉār, who composed the third decad on him and his wife, might ascend to the heavens. Āṭukōṭpāṭṭu-c-Cēralātaṉ gifted cattle and a whole village in Kuṭa Nādu to 'Pārppārs'. This information is furnished in the Patikam to the sixth decad of Patiṟṟuppattu. It leads us to infer that the Brahmanical influence was spread in Cēra Nādu even in those early times.[156]

Religion—Rites and Rituals:

There were saints called 'Muṉivars' and they never swerved from the path of virtue and truth and hence they commanded the respect of all. It is they who persuaded the Kings to perform sacrifices according to the Vēdic rites.[157]

We come across sages, who observed fasting for self-purification, proceeding to rivers flowing with cool water for their morning

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154. -do- VIII: 4: 1–2.
155. -do- VII: 4: 23–28.
156. (i) Dr. M. Rajamanickanar; Tamiḻ Moḻi-Ilakkiya Varalāṟu p. 233.
(ii) Dr. P. Arunachalam; Proceedings of the first International Conference Seminar of Tamiḻ Studies, Kuala Lampur—Malaysia, Article on Peruñcōṟṟu Utiyaṉ Cēralātaṉ', p. 313.
157. Patiṟṟup; III: 1: 1–7.

oblutions at the ringing of the temple bell. After bath, they worship at the feet of Tirumāl who holds the chakra (the weapon of wheel) in one hand and wears the fragrant 'tuḷaci' garlands on his broad chest.[158] The early commentator on Patiṟṟuppattu while commenting on these lines,[159] points out, that the Tirumāl referred to in them, is the presiding deity of Tiruvan̲antapuram. From his comments, we can reason that Sri Anantapadmanabha Swami of Tiruvan̲antapuram had been worshipped during as early as the Sangham age.

The Cērā monarch paid homage to Koṟṟavai, the goddess of Ayirai hills invoking Her blessing on them for achieving glorious success in their military campaigns. The warriors of the Cērā army offered Her cooked rice mixed with blood and invoked Her protection for them.[160]

We are informed in the second decad of Patiṟṟuppattu, that God Muruga rode an elephant called 'Piṇimukam'.[161] This anecdote and another relating to 'Akkuran̲'[162] mentioned in Bharatam and presumed to be one among the first seven great men of unbounded benevolence,[163] are the only two legends mentioned in Patiṟṟuppattu anthology.

Encomiums paid to the Cērā Kings by poets :

The encomiums paid to the Cērā monarchs by the Tāmil poets are varied, passionate and impressive.

The composer of the second decad invokes the King to sustain the fame and tradition which characterised his ancestors[164]

58. -do- IV : 1 : 5–10.

59. -do- IV : 1 : 9. 'செல்வன் என்றது திருவனந்தபுரத்துத் திருமாலை'

60. -do- IX : 9 : 11–12.

61. -do- II : 1 : 6.

62. -do- II : 1 : 7.

63. "அக்குரன், பாரதத்தில் கூறப்படுபவனும் தலையெழு வள்ளல்களு ளொருவனு மாகிய அக்குரன் போலும்; கர்ணனென்று நினைத்தற்கு இடமுண்டு; ஆதாரம் கிடைக்கவில்லை."

—டாக்டர் உ. வே. சாமிநாதையர்.

64. Patiṟṟup; II ; 4 : 19–22.

and to live solely for the good of his people.[165] He blesses the worthy belly of the lady who loves the great monarch.[166]

Pālai-k-Kautamaṉār the author of the third decad, blesses Palyāṉai-c-Celkeḷu Kuṭṭuvaṉ, the hero of his song, and his wife to live long for 'thousand veḷḷam[167] years'.[168] He wishes that the exuberant wealth of the Cērā King may continue to flourish fresh for ever.[169]

In the fourth decad, the King is blessed with prosperity of his might and with ever increasing wealth and welfare for his country.[170] The King is blessed with prosperity and plenty that those gifts may be passed on to his subjects too.[171] The sands of the sea-shore may be counted, but not the number of days the king would continue to thrive.[172]

Kākkai-pāṭiṉiyār blesses the hero of the song to continue to live in this world for ages without craving to leave for the 'Swargaloga'.[173] He should live for ever.[174] The head garland is blessed too.[175]

Other poets, too, wish the king long life and prosperity. He may live for the duration of 'Āmpal',[176] 'Veḷḷam' and upto the eternity.[177] His life will endure as long as the 'Ayirai'

165. -do- II : 5 : 24.

166. -do- II : 10 : 28.

167. Tol; Eḻuttu; Puḷḷimayaṅkiyal; 98. The word 'Veḷḷam' denoting a number of infinity.

168. Patiṟṟup; III : 1 : 38.

169. -do- III : 4 : 30.

170. -do- IV : 6 : 1–2, 14.

171. -do- IV : 7 : 1–2.

172. -do- V : 8 : 12, 18.

173. -do- VI : 4 : 2 ; 10–11.

174. -do- VI : 5 : 13.

175. -do- VI : 2 : 27 : 4 : 2; 6 : 3 ; 9 : 13.

176. Tol ; Eḻuttu ; Puḷḷimayaṅkiyal ; 98.
The word 'ampal' denoting a number of infinity.

177. Patiṟṟup ; VII : 3 : 19–21.

hills.[178] The King should run the full course of the life ordained to him by God.[179]

The King's life should prolong to infinity as the life of the sun.[180] He is blessed to lead a fruitful and splendorous life along with his wife for a long time.[181]

"May the day, month, year, ūḻi, and Veḷḷam of creation be identical with the day, month, year, ūḻi, and veḷḷam, of your life"—so extols Peruṅkuṉṟūr-kiḻār.[182] These are some of the prayers and wishes of the poets for the long and prosperous life of the monarchs.

"With the passage of time and the development of social and political organisation, the institution of kingship attained greater importance. During the early centuries of the Christian Era and even before, known as the Sangam age in South India, monarchy was a settled institution".[183] This statement is evidenced in the foregoing pages.

We have been till now delving into the sources of Patiṟṟup-pattu anthology for evidence regarding the administrative excellence, the generosity and the military might of the Cērā monarchs; and they are very many and graphic.

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178. -do- VIII : 10 : 23-27 ; 1 : 24.
179. -do- VIII : 1 : 24.
180. -do- IX : 8 : 38.
181. -do- IX : 9 : 17-20.
182. -do- IX : 10 : 51-54.
183. Dr. T. V. Mahalingam ; South Indian Polity, p. 12.

3. THE GENEROSITY OF THE CĒRĀS

The heroism of kings yields them victory, while their benevolence exalts them in the realms of fame. Their heroism in the war-front is equalled only by their generosity to the needy. It is said, that the wide expanse of the Cērā Country, the fertility of its soil, the heroism of the warriors, and the far-famed munificence of its monarchs obviously entitled the Cērā kings, an exalted and pre-eminent position in the history of Tāmil Nādu.[1]

That charity was a cardinal virtue of the Cērās, can be gleaned from Patirruppattu. The Patikams to Patirruppattu give us a clear idea of the charitableness of the Cērā monarchs. It is however held that the Patikams were a later interpolation to the text of the poems: But scholars are of the opinion that the information contained in the Patikams are trustworthy. Anyhow, we shall explore the text of Patirruppattu. The three sources of income of kings were income from crown lands, taxes and the tribute paid by vassal kings.[3] As the Cērā kings were always subduing smaller princes, the tribute was the highest source of their income. Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñcēralātaṉ is described as a hero who vanquished the Kadambas after a sea voyage.[4] Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ is also referred to, as having to his credit, naval victories, in addition to putting down rulers speaking different languages from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin in the far south.[5]

Kuṭakkō Iḷañcēral Irumporai is praised as commanding several princes as vassals.[6]

In the second decad, Kumaṭṭūr-k-Kaṇṇaṉār refers to the heroism and generosity of Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñcēralātaṉ as under:

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1. Thiru M. Raghava Ayyangar; Cēra vēntar ceyyuṭ kōvai; Preface p. 1.
2. Dr. M. A. Duraiarangasamy; 'Utiyaṉ Cēral Bharātha Kalattavaṉā ?' Annals of Oriental Research: Vol. XXI Part I (1966) pp. 10.
3. Kuṟaḷ; 756.
4. Patiṟṟup; II : 10 : 2–4.
5. -do- V : 8 : 3–4. V : 3 : 7–11.
6. -do- IX : 8 : 13–14.

His generosity attracted to his palace gates, like a magnet, the poor and needy across forests and hillocks in spite of their having to surmount several hazards and hurdles. He fed them with excellent food made of quality rice and fattened meat and gave them sweet toddy also.[7] They were then asked to cast off their dirty and tattered clothing and dress themselves in the silk garments presented by the king. To women, not only food and clothing, but also jewels and precious stones were given.[8] The poet also compares this king to 'Akkuraṉ' in his unstinted and selfless charity.[9] First on the battle-front, foremost among the patrons of sweet songstresses,[10] king of heroes and the treasure of bards", so says, the poet and thus brings out the twin qualities of heroism and benevolence.

To all, who came to him, he gave without any thought of stopping and the poet pays a tribute to this king, that he scattered unlimited quantities of gold jewels and that he deserved all the praise bestowed on him.[12] To the artist in dance and song, he gave countless horses, elephants, and chariots. His mind was unchanging in giving and always so. As such, his gifts gave full satisfaction to the needy, banishing poverty for ever.[13] The poet emphasises, that his charity never failed even though monsoons may sometimes fail.[14]

Next, we shall examine the praise bestowed upon another Cērā king Celkeḻu Kuṭṭuvaṉ with many elephants. Pālai-k-kauta-maṉār says, that this king was famous for giving away jewels as gifts.[15]

7. -do- II : 2 16–18.
8. -do- II : 2 : 19–25.
9. -do- II : 4 : 7.
10. -do- II : 4 : 17.
11. -do- II : 5 : 21.
12. -do- II : 5 : 35–39.
13. -do- II; 10 : 14–16.
14. -do- III : 8 : 11–12.
15. -do- III : 1 : 8–9.

He is described as always victorious in war, and in charity he was second to none. His kitchen showed a unique spectacle of shining pestles, huge cooking vessels and tools showing unceasing use of mutton even in times of drought. Even if countless numbers approached him for food and refreshments, his palace was always ready to give. The poet blessed the king, that his wealth useful for charity should ever be growing.[16] The same poet says, in another verse that even in days of drought dried up fields and famine, this king continued to be unstinting in his generosity. When 'u<u>n</u>nam' tree, the abode of beetles shrivelled, and when fields were barren, dancers and bards go over to street corners and entertain people. Then the king used to help them out of their hunger with presents consisting of jewels of gold to their satisfaction. In their joy of having received gifts of recognition, they would fly into ecstacies of dance and song. The king will watch them after a light drink and then shower on them costly diamonds as gifts.[17] Hospitality has continued in Cērā land, even when there was never ending demand on charity.[18]

The next king, who is in our purview, is Kaḷaṅkāy-k-Kaṇṇi Nārmuṭic Cēral. He is referred to, by Kāppiyāṟṟu-k-Kāppiyaṉār as equal to the celebrated patron 'Vaṇṭaṉ' noted for his immense wealth and unbounded charity.[19] The poet extols him as a treasure house of the needy and a symbol of court charity for bards.[20] He used to share with others even those things which he liked most. "That wealth is for giving as even nectar is for sharing, and that one should live for the benefit of all his fellowmen" was this king's motto.[21]

"Even a dancer who pleased the king with the performance of her art was given excellent elephants captured by him in war", says the poet Kāppiyāṟṟu-k-Kāppiyaṉār.[22]

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16. -do- III : 4 : 18–22, 30.
17. -do- III : 3 : 1–10.
18. -do- III : 1 : 8–9.
19. -do- IV : 1 : 21–23.
20. -do- IV : 8 : 9.
21. -do- IV : 8 : 13–16.
22. -do- IV : 10 : 21–31.

The hero of the fifth decad of Patirruppattu, is Cēran Ceṅkuṭṭuvan. Paranar, the celebrated poet of the Saṅgam age, brings out in his poems, all the aspects of the boundless generosity of this king. He made endless gifts to dancers and their relations to keep them off from poverty at all times. His gifts to jesters was as affluent and welcome as plentiful rains after drought. Women dancers were given female elephants, warriors got ferocious elephants, heralds secured horses and dancers were served with toddy.[23]

Paranar has described the king, as the symbol of generosity, who without hesitation gave valuable loot taken in times of war to those poets who sang his praises, without keeping anything for himself as he had a heart devoid of selfishness.[24] Even women poets stayed in the battle-field to sing about the heroism of this king without any thought of praising other kings[25]

In every war, Ceṅkuṭṭuvan was victorious. The minstrels were at once rewarded with gifts of elephants. The victory was celebrated with dance and song at his capital in which hilarious dancers participated.[26]

The bards were given gifts of gold lotuses and beautiful damsels were given costly necklaces.[27] All the booty got by victory was distributed freely to bards who praised the king, says Paranar.[28] After each victory, there was sumptuous dinners to the dancers and their relations at the palace.[29] At these dinners, the preparations were common to the king and guests.[30]

In the sixth decad, we get a picture of Āṭu-kōtpāṭṭu-c-cēralātan from poetess Kākkai-pāṭiniyār Nac-ceḷḷaiyār.

23. -do- V : 3 : 12–36.
24. -do- V : 4 : 3–6.
25. -do- V : 6 : 13–14.
26. -do- V : 7 : 1–8.
27. -do- V : 8 : 1–2.
28. -do- V : 8 : 5–6.
29. -do- V : 9 : 1–3.
30. -do- V : 5 : 13.

This fearless king, on the battle-field was fighting the foes like lightning successively showering blows after blows on the enemy. His hands in war are compared to Indra's bolt. The same hands were turned downward to dole out gifts and charity to the needy till their wants were banished. But never those hands accustomed to receive from any one anything, however valuable in might be.[31]

He was an enemy to the poverty of the needy. He continued to give always till their poverty was completely banished. Even things, that were precious, were given away as gifts to the poor. Naturally poets praises him in glowing terms. His fame which spread in all directions drew the poet to his court.[32]

Therefore in the country of this generous king, poverty could not stay. Poverty disappeared and wealth smiled on his beautiful land. There was none who was needy. Yet, the king did not like to spend even a single day without giving. So, he sent his chariot to get the needy from adjoining countries to lavish on them his unending gifts.[33] This was not the height of his generous temperament. He used to be pained more at the height of his generous temperament. He used to be pained more at the sight of tears in the eyes of the poor than to see tears rolling down the lovely cheeks of the beloved young ladies wearing anklets known for their goodness, modesty and sulkiness in his presence.[34]

The news of his charity spread also to small hamlets, where he caused happiness and joy to dawn.[35]

All these show, that sympathy had the upperhand over love in his mind.

31, -do- VI : 2 : 11–13.

32. -do- VI : 4 : 1–9.

33. -do- VI : 5 : 10–12.

34. -do- VI : 7 : 10–15.

35. -do- VI : 9 : 7–8 : 14–15.

As a soldier, dealing death on the war-front, and as a king always unbending to his enemies, was always at his best in scattering limitless wealth among the bards.[36]

Kapilar, the great poet, whose contribution to Saṅgam poetry surpasses all others of his age, sings of Celva-k-Kaṭuṅkō Vāḷiyātaṉ in the seventh decad of Patiṟṟuppattu. He compares this king, to the Patron Pāri, whose generation was never dried up in his heart, though the sandal paste on his chest might have dried. The poet does not come to this king to sing with any reservation about his continuous benevolence. He gave without thinking, without stopping to have joyous satisfaction of giving but always was desirous of giving and giving and giving.[37]

The poet says, that the king gave liberally to dancers: his generosity was more profuse than pouring rain. He was thus a reservoir of gifts to bards and a treasure-house for the needy. The king used to distribute elephants coming to him as tribute as also heaps of paddy to the needy.[38]

In a poem classified as 'Pāṇāṟṟu-p-paṭai', the poet eulogises this king, as the lord of 'Nēri' hills and a gentleman to the core who would give to any bard and his kith and kin valuable jewels manufactured at 'Koṭumaṇam' and pearls from 'Pantar'.[39] In the reign of this king, naturally people lived without any fear and want ('nāma maṟiyā yēma vāḻkkai'.)[40]

The Patikam of the seventh decad says, that the king gave to Kapilar 100,000 gold coins (called 'ciṟupuṟams') and also all that came into his vision when he got upon the hill 'Naṉṟā'.[41]

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36. -do- VI : 10 : 1-3.

37. -do- VII : 1 : 7-14.

38. -do- VII : 6 : 7-9.

39. -do- VII : 7 ; 1-4; 21-23.

40. -do- VII : 8 : 12.

41. "பாடிப்பெற்ற பரிசில்: சிறுபுறமென நூறாயிரங் காணங் கொடுத்து நன்றா வென்னும் குன்றேறி நின்று தன் கண்ணிற் கண்ட நாடெல்லாம் காட்டிக் கொடுத்தான் அக்கோ."

This act of giving away lands as gift is borne out by the (actual geographical locality) existence of land called 'Kapilar Kāṉam' in modern Kerala.[42]

Peruṅkuṉṟūr-kiḻār, in the ninth decad says, that the spears left by the defeated princes were not more in number than the villages given to Kapilar in appreciation of his poetic talent by the King. This confirms the statement in the Patikam and thus saves the seventh Patikam of the seventh decad from the usual criticism of hyperbole.[43]

Aricil-kiḻār, in the eighth decad gives us an account of King Peruñcēral-Irumpoṟai. The poet says, that the king's prosperity, heroism and generosity cannot be adequately expressed.[44]

The generosity of this king not only extended to his court but also to his military camps surrounded by enemy camps. Even there he used to give elephants and horses to those who came to see him.[45] The king was always amidst the needy ever giving to them.[46] The Patikam of the ninth decad says, that this king even gave away his throne to the poet Aricil-kiḻār, thus proving his unbounded generosity.[47]

We shall now proceed to study the bounteous nature of Kuṭakkō Iḷañcēral Irumpoṟai as sung by Peruṅkuṉṟūr Kiḻār. The wealth of the king never dwindled even when he began to lavish, his gifts on bards. He won unrivalled fame by his continous gifts to the poor which banished their poverty and suffering.[48]

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42. -do- Prof. T. P. Meenakshisundaram Pillai; Introduction to Prof. Auvai Duraisami Pillai's commentary on Patiṟṟuppattu, p. 5.

43. Patiṟṟup: IX : 5 : 9–13.

44. -do- VIII : 3 : 12–13.

45. -do- VIII : 6 : 7–9.

46. -do- VIII : 9 : 2.

47. "பாடிப்பெற்ற பரிசில்: தானும் கோயிலாளும் புறம் போந்து நின்று கோயிலுள்ளவெல்லாம் கொண்மின் என்று காணம் ஒன்பது நூறாயிரத்தோடு அரசு கட்டிற் கொடுப்ப, அவர், யான் இரப்ப இதனை யாள்க என்று அமைச்சுப் பூண்டார்."

48. Patiṟṟup; IX; 6 : 5–8.

His heart was softer than the softest springs and he gave the women bards jewels of gold in plenty. His generosity was always unfailing and the bards always counted upon him unlike the boatswain who throws away the paddles after crossing a river.[49]

The king is spoken of having limitless wealth, a wealth that was never diminishing by his charity,[50] his heart always yearning to give,[51] and as such, this king is compared to the ocean which can never dry up.[52]

Thus, the critical examination of Patiṟṟuppattu which, deals with eight Cērā rulers, confirms us in the view that their heroism in war was equalled with the exquisite and never-ending generosity in peace. The Patikams to the decad, throw further light on the benevolence of the Cērās and we are amazed at the unrivalled benevolence of the Cērā rulers of the Saṅgam Epoch.

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49. -do- IX : 7 : 1-5.
50. -do- IX : 8 : 26-27.
51. -do- IX : 10 : 14.
52. -do- IX : 10 : 16.

4. SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE PEOPLE OF THE CĒRĀ COUNTRY

The Cērā country :

During Cērā times, the land was endowed with rich gifts of nature, like fertility and plentiful water resources, possessing all the advantages of a good and typical country as defined by Tiruvaḷḷuvar in Tirukkuraḷ.[1] The Cērā country offered all facilities for a good and prosperous life. The people of the country yielded the maximum usufructs. Thus Neytal, (maritime region) Kuriñci. (hilly-tracts) Mullai (forest land) and Marutam (cultivated lands)—all these regions helped in making the people prosperous by their yields. Naturally, the villages presented the appearance of all round prosperity as can be gauged by dance and continuous festivity.[2] There was brisk trade in the country including sales of gold. The people were happy, free from any fear of enemies, and were leading a life of righteousness. They never swerved from truthful ways of life and proper behaviour. They had no envy, hunger and disease. As they had all resources, none left the country in search of better ones. The people were able to live a full life in a fertile land which never lost its fertility. That the people had always a square meal, is shown in the quotation in which bards praised the king for giving them so much food as to make them fatter. This is borne by what Kumaṭṭūr-k-Kaṇṇaṉār says.[3]

The same poet in another place says, that the country was prosperous and disease and hunger were not heard of during the reign of Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñcēralātan.[4] "Arable lands became cultivated fields ; wherein fish were nurtured along with crops. Lands burrowed by pigs could be converted into paddy fields being levelled by the people with their feet. In the fields of sugarcane, 'neytal' flowers were so plentiful that buffaloes were unwilling

1. Kuraḷ ; 731–740.
2. Patiṟṟup ; II : 5 : 16–18.
3. -do- II : 5 : 19–34.
4. -do- II : 3 : 27–28.

to leave the place in search of other pastures. The wastelands where young ladies performed the 'tuṇaṅkai' dance boisterously became now repositories of 'āmpal' flowers, the delightful fodder of aged oxen. The existence of coconut groves and groups of 'maruta' trees full of chirping birds, ponds with tilting flowers connected by canals, proves that the poetical description of the land as a land of prosperity, is true to the fact.[5]

A similar description of the country during the days of the next King Palyāṉai Cel-keḻu Kuṭṭuvaṉ is given by the poet Pālai-k-kautamaṉār which shows that the country was always prosperous. Timely rains, healthy people, maritine region and forest lands yielding useful products, without very heavy rains or drought were the remarkable features of the country. Even during the summer when hills were opaque when streams were drying up and arable lands became fragmented due to heat, the 'Pēriyāṟu' continued to flow making a pleasing sound washing dry leaves along the current. Only this sound was heard by the people and they never heard the sounds of the marching feet of foes.

Young ladies adorning their hair with water-lilies and dressed in leafy costume bedecked with 'āmpal' flowers climbed up 'marutam' trees and sang notes in tune with instrumental music of drunken-players on the banks of the nearby pond. The music of the young folk plied the peacocks to dance making pleasing sounds. Other sounds heard, were that of the water dashing against the bund of the lake and that of the cartman coaxing his oxen out of a mire into which the cart had sunk. Only these sounds and not the sounds of the marching feet of foes were heard in the land of Palyāṉai-c-Celkeḻu Kuṭṭuvaṉ.[7] Sugarcane harvesting was done throughout the year (i.e.) during all the seasons.[8] We shall now have glimpses of the country during the days of Āṭukōtpāṭṭu Cēralātaṉ as described by the poetess Kākkai-pāṭiṉiyār.

5. -do- II : 3 : 1-10.
6. -do- III : 8 : 8-14.
7. -do- III : 7 : 1-16.
8. -do- III : 10 : 14.

The 'neytal' flowers looked like the eyes of the creepers and the fragrance of the honey gathered by the bees from these flowers permeated the atmosphere all over the place. The willowing screwpine, the shrubs of the coast line added to the welcome atmosphere of the sea-coast. The farmers were very hard working and were cultivating even dry lands with the help of oxen bedecked with bells. Various kinds of land-even, uneven, hilly low lying lands, hills and coast-lands, were all yielding their usufructs.[9] The everlasting yield from lands was a continuous process and not mere seasonal.[10]

Kapilar in the seventh decad says, that even gravel lands yielded plentifully in the days of Celvak-kaṭuṅkō Vāḻiyātaṉ.[11]

In the eighth decad, Aricil-Kiḻār says, that the rains were plentiful all over the country and this led to alround cultivation resulting in plentiful harvests. The farmers wore 'pakaṉṟai' flowers as headdress during the cultivation season.[12]

In the ninth decad Peruṅkuṉṟūr-Kiḻār describes that the people of 'Kolli' hills, especially the well-to-do among them, were leading a life of joy wearing 'kāntaḷ' flowers and drinking fermented toddy from bamboo pipes and feasting upon jack fruits available in abundance.[13]

The land of Iḷañcēraṉ Irumpoṟai has a beautiful coastline, with waves dashing against nice sands, covered with ever green shrubs and groves. There were seasonal rains and this led to the mating and enjoyment of deer. Birds and bees buzzed out from trees and there was āmple supply of fruits and roots leaving surpluses after the full use. The cattle had enough fodder. There are indications to show that the people were a prosperous agricultural community. The planetary positions in the sky, were always normal and this led to timely rains which helped to make

9. -do- VI : 8 : 15–19.
10. -do- VI : 10 : 8.
11. -do- VII : 6 : 18–20.
12. -do- VIII : 6 : 9–15.
13. -do- IX : 1 : 19–24.

the Cērā country surplus in prosperity. Thus observes Peruñkuṉṟūr-kiḻār, in the 9th decad in praise of Iḷañcēral Irumpoṟai.[14] The foregoing observations culled from the poets of the age reveal that the rains were timely and all the four natural regions of the country had the full complement of agricultural production. The people lived a life of joy unending pleasure punctuated by feasts and festivals.

The people:

The people of the Cērā country lived a life of ease without casting jealous eyes on the wealth of others; their knowledge was pure; they were always doing good to others showing affection and sympathy for all and sharing all the pleasures of life with others. They were duty-conscious and lived a life of chivalry. They had some customs like (i) frolicking in couples in the fresh waters of rivers[15] and (ii) spending their summer amidst cool groves along with their kith and kin.[16] During the days of peace, they used to take the tusks of elephants captured during war, and barter them for flasks of fermented toddy, and enjoyed life in a hilarious manner. This enjoyment is compared by the poet to the happiness in other worlds (Uttarakuru).[17] They used to pound paddy with pestles with iron ends and used to cook the rice and eat to their full along with guests; mutton was also served with rice.[18] The womenfolk who used to scare away cranes waiting for fishes in the fields were always fully bedecked with plentiful jewels.[19]

This only shows the never ending prosperity of the people.

Food:

The staple food of the people consisted of white cooked rice with fatty mutton and was supplemented by flowerbuds soaked

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14. -do- IX : 9 : 1-7.
15. -do- V : 8 : 14.
16. -do- V : 8 : 13-18.
17. -do- VII : 8 : 9-14.
18. -do- III : 4 : 18-22.
19. -do- VIII : 3 : 4-9.

in honey.[20] Toddy and vegetables formed part of the foodcontent of the people.[21] Even a Brahmin poet Pālai-k-Kautamaṉār mentions, that the mutton part of the food was so fatty as to be compared to the foam of surging waves.[22] He also says, that the supply of toddy was like pouring rain.[23] Kākkai-pāṭiṉiyār says, that the warriors consumed a mixed diet of mutton and dholl.[24]

These observations of poets reveal, that people were good eaters of rice, mutton and were addicted to toddy.

Dress :

There is mention of only one type of dress habits among the people in the second decad. It is said, that the king gave the poet silken garments to replace the dirty rags that he wore.[25]

This reference shows that people generally wore cotton fabrics but kings used silks and gave presents of silk garments to the bards.

Jewels :

In all the nine instances[26] where reference is made to ladies, we find mention of jewels as an integral part of their decoration. The particular jewels mentioned are ear-rings, bangles, anklets and necklaces set with dazzling diamonds.

Women in Cēra country :

The womenfolk had curly hair waving beautifully down their rosy cheeks and sparkling ear-rings glittering among the culls in such a charming way, as to evoke the envy of the damsels of

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20. -do- II : 2 : 16–18.
21. -do- II : 8 : 1–2.
22. -do- III : 1 : 10–11.
23. -do- III : 1 : 16–17.
24. -do- VI : 5 ; 7–8.
25. -do- II : 2 : 19–21.
26. -do- II : 3 : 21 ; 4 : 14–15 ; III : 9 : 2 ; 9 : 6 ; V : 3 : 2 ; 6 : 1–4 ; VII : 8 : 15 ; 18–19 ; VIII : 3 : 5–6 ; IX : 6 : 10–12.

heaven.[27] In the fifth decad, there is mention of women using artificial hair-wigs to supplement their natural hair. Their hair was glistening dark.[28] Young women after beating rice with pestles, will keep the pestles leaning on plantain trees and go to the paddy-fields to pluck the 'vaḷḷai' flowers from there where the ears of corn bent by the weight of ripe paddy greet their eyes.[29] Sometimes, they used to scare away cranes.[30] Another pastime is counting of female elephants that are lured into the pit. The poet says, that the female elephants were so many that the ladies left off counting after some time.[31] And their songs were about the heroic deeds of besieging fortresses sung in 'pālai' tunes.[32]

The pangs of seperation sustained by the heroine, is depicted in a picturesque way, by the poet Kapilar: "Being sleepless, her ornaments become loose day by day, her frame grows slim, as days pass on and she is marking the days of separation one by one with her rosy fingers till their rosiness gave place to reddishness."[33] There is a corroborative evidence in a poem in Akanāṉūṟu wherein could be known the practice of making marks on the walls the days of separation from the hero and anxiously awaiting his return.[34] We have already touched upon the practice prevalent among wealthy young ladies of scaring away cranes waiting to catch the fish in paddy-fields overflowing with water.[35] That these young ladies were bedecked with jewels adds to our information that the country was not only rich in soil but also in gold. The ladies were adepts in frolicking in the clear waters

27. -do- IX : 2 : 22-23; II : 3 : 21.

28. -do- V : 3 : 1-5.

29. -do- III : 9 : 1-3.

30. -do- III : 9 : 6-7.

31. -do- V : 3 : 3-5.

32. -do- V : 6 : 1-6.

33. -do- VII : 8 : 15-19.

34. Aka : 61.

35. Patiṟṟup : VIII : 3 : 4-7.

of the River 'Vāṉi,' says the poet Peruṅkuṉṟūr-kiḻār.[36] The Perumpāṇāṟṟu-paṭai corroborates, that ladies delighted in bathing in the river waters and sometimes their earrings fell into the crystal clear water of the river.[37]

The Queen :

According to Patiṟṟuppattu, the beauty of the queen evoked the envy of heavenly damsels. Their tresses were overlaid with jewels. Fresh fragrant flowers that were in the tresses lured bees to perch on their curls.[38] The queen was an example of modesty combined with chastity. Even when she lost her balance, her words were sweet and her demeanour was marked by a dignified smile. Her coral-red mouth spouted nector and her sparkling eyes expressed her inner joy. A lustrous brow and tilting gait marked the queen.[39] When her lord was away on the battle-front, she somehow managed to pass the day, but during nights, it was very difficult for her to sleep. But, when at last she was able to wink, she gets refreshed when she thinks of her lord in her dream.[40] This description refers to the queen of Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñcēralātaṉ.

We shall now consider about the queen of Palyāṉai-c-Celkeḻu Kuṭṭuvaṉ. Her tresses were pleasing even when disorderly and when plaited emanated 'mullai' odour. Her large sparkling eyes were lustrous spreading light on her broad face unlike flowers of a tank which blossomed only during seasons. Her shoulders were broad like the plumpy bamboos on the shores of a perenniel river.[41]

The Queen of Kaḷaṅkāy-k-Kaṇṇi Nārmuṭi-cēral had tresses which lured bees. She was a good housewife who was always following established tenets of house-wife like Aruntati. Her

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36. -do- IX : 6 : 9–12.
37. Porumpāṇi : 311–312
38. Patiṟṟup: II : 4 : 13–15.
39. -do- II : 6 : 10–14.
40. -do- II : 9 : 11–14.
41. -do- III : 1 : 32–37.

charming forehead was more resplendent than her ear-rings and her bodily frame outshone her jewels.[42]

Āṭukōṭpāṭṭu-c-Cēralātaṉ's queen is described in an angry mood. The king approached her after taking part in a street dance. Her gait was marked by her disturbed mind, her garlands were shaking, eyes were not glowing but cool; she had a garland in her hands with which she walked away in anger without putting it on her lord, though the king in all his superb majesty asked for it.[43]

Kapilar describes the Queen of Celvakkaṭuṅkō Vāḻiyātaṉ, as possessing perfection of beauty in a palace full of exquisite paintings. He describes her, as a fitting patrner to her heroic king.[44] We may notice in passing, that Nakkīrar describes Lord Muruga as a befitting husband, of the chaste, pure and beautiful Dēvayāṉi Devi to show a corroboration of such description in Tamil Literature.[45] In another place, Kapilar describes the Cēra king as the lord of a queen adorned with jewels, that shone over a heaving breast, a queen having charming hips, wide eyes, broad shoulders like plumpy bamboos, and even heavenly deities tried in vain to ensnare her out of admiration for her virtues of chastity.[46] Her broad forehead sent forth its fragrance to all on-lookers.[47]

Queen Cēramādevi's beauty is compared to the beauty of a country having rich-fields and green lands fed by the River Cauvery. She is described as wearing anklets of exquisite workmanship and having beautiful tresses. Her modesty and gentleness imported on her gait an air of superb chastity.[48]

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42. -do- IV : 1 : 23–28.
43. -do- VI : 2 : 13–24.
44. -do- VII : 1 : 3–4.
45. Tirumuruku : 6.
46. Patiṟṟup : VII : 5 : 6–10.
47. -do- VII : 10 : 14–16.
48. -do- IX : 10 : 46–50.

The above descriptions reveal, that the Cēra queens were famous for their beauty, were known for being affectionate wives, always gentle and modest in their behaviour and their chastity was an integral component of their character.

Women Dancers :

Women dancers represented one aspect of the artistes of the days. Dancing was a technique and dancers were those who were adepts in the technique. They were accustomed to dance before the kings or princes and they lived on the gifts they had received.

Tolkāppiyaṉār classifies this kind of act under the category of 'āṟṟuppaṭai.'[49] 'Āṟṟuppaṭai' is a form of poetry found in Sangham literature which term means simply 'showing the path.' The theme of 'āṟṟuppaṭai' is the guidance in which a bard, a musician or a dancer, male or female perceives the pitiable state of poverty of one of his kind on the way, while returning from a munificient patron with bountiful gifts, and sympathetically guides and instructs him to go to that patron, and get relieved of his distress as he had done.[50]

The dancers after receiving gifts used to direct others like them to kings or patrons to benefit by such bounties. This quality of persons, who overcome poverty and become rich and showed the way to others who were placed in similar circumstances, is really a praiseworthy trait.

There is a reference in all the 10 decads of Patiṟṟuppattu anthology to such generous dancers.[51]

The dancers were endowed with natural beauty and to this way added their pleasing dress, long plaited tresses of five kinds, smiling faces, and charming youth.[52] They used to sing like

49. Tol: Poruḷ: Puṟattiṇai iyal: 91.

50. Dr. M. Varadarajan; The treatment of Nature in Sangam literature p. 15.

51. Patiṟṟup: II: 8:4-6; 3: 21-22; V: 7:6-8; 9:2; VI: 1: 10-11; 19-20; VI: 4: 3-6; VI: 7: 5-6; VI: 8: 1; VII: 1: 16-18; VIII: 1-6.

52. Patiṟṟup; II: 8: 4-6.

'Kinnara' birds before kings and were rewarded with female-elephants.[53] Their dance was, in the light, provided by torches lit with oil and waving its flames according to the movement of air.[54]

Kākkai-pāṭiniyār describes dancers as having bright foreheads, youthful look, shining teeth, tilting gait and coral lips and their words were sweet.[55] Their bangles were gingling. Their shoulders were shaped like bamboos; their cool eyes, heaving breasts tapering at two points, their embroidered dress and their tresses attracting bees and shining jewellery made them alluring. They sang the heroic deeds of Kings.[56] Professionals danced to the tune of bards and ministrels.[57] In court dances, these damsels danced in perfect harmony with the drums and mnsical instruments.[58] Aricil-kiḻār mentions, one dancer having a few bangles only, so that, the court may not be blooded by broken bangles in case she wore many bangles.[59]

Male-dancers :

Male-dancers were called 'Kōṭiyar' and they were acustomed to dance during festivities.[60]

Aṛyas :

These Aryas are referred to in one poem as living at the foot of the famous Himalayas.[61]

Akavalars :

They are a particulat type of bards referred to by Paraṇar as singing in public places with a stick in their hands. They used

53. -do- V : 3 : 21–22.
54. -do- V : 7 : 3–8.
55. -do- VI : 1 : 10–11 ; 19–21
56. -do- VI : 4 : 3–6.
57. -do- VI : 8 : 1.
58. -do- VI : 1 : 16–18.
59. -do- VIII : 8 : 1 : 6 ; Old commentary.
60. -do- VI : 6 : 1–3.
61. -do- II : 1 : 23.

to criss-cross the streets singing in praise of the victories of kings and often were rewarded by gifts of horses.[62]

Antaṇar ;

They are referred to, in one line, as chanting mantras, performing sacrifices and persuading others also to follow their methods, to give alms and to receive gifts.[63]

Isai (Music) :

There are five references to music in Patiṟṟuppattu.[64] Music was practised by bards, poets, dancers and minstrels. They wēre patronised by kings, feudatories and people. The 'yāḻ' is referred to, as having strong strings to punctuate tha ups and downs of song. The musicians had servants to carry the 'yāḻ' 'muḻā' one-eyed instrument called 'kiṇai' and peruvaṅkiyam.' They were singing hymns, in praise of God, for their protection during their travel.[65] The fully equipped women-dancers used blg 'yāḻ' instrument tuned to 'palai', to praise the besiege of the fortresses of the enemies by the king.[66]

Kākkai-pāṭiṉiyār refers to a song in palai tune describing the undaunted demenour of the king when attacked.[67] Kāpilar also refers to 'yāḻ' in the seventh decād. An expert 'yāḻ' player could bring the various feelings including sorrow on his instruments.[68] An experienced 'yāḻ' player is referred to, as singing a happy tune on the yāḻ expecting a reward.[69] It is to be noted, that all references to music are related to 'pālai' tune.

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62. -do- V : 3 : 26–28.

63. -do- III : 4 : 6–8.

64. -do- V : 1 : 1–6 ; 6 : 5–6 ; VI : 7 : 7–9 ; VII : 5 : 14–15 ; VII : 6 : 1–3.

65. -do- V : 1 : 1–6.

66. -do- V : 6 : 1–6.

67. -do- VI : 7 : 7–9.

68. -do- VII : 5 : 14–17.

69. -do- VII : 6 : 1–3.

Dance :

'Tuṇaṅkai' is referred to, in five poems of Patiṟṟuppattu.[70]

The young dancing ladies, dressed in leaves interspersed with 'āmpal' flowers, used to dance so merrily as to make the flowers fall away and these flowers become the fodder of the old oxen.[71]

Paraṇar also refers to dance according to 'tuṇaṅkai' method by warriors, after victory on the battle-field by raising their muscular shoulders comparable to the strong wooden bolts behind the doors of fortresses. It is interesting to know, that King Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvan also danced along with his warriors.[72] There is also a reference to Āṭukōṭpāṭṭu-c-Cēralātaṉ, dancing on the battlefield after his victory along with his soldiers.[73] There is a special reference to 'victory-dance' ('Veṉṟāṭu tuṇaṅkai') in the 8th decad, by Aricil-kiḻār.[74]

King Āṭukōṭpāṭṭu-c-Cēralātaṉ's 'tuṇaṅkai' dance with his royal fingers linked with dancers, evoked the sulkiness of his queen.[75] These descriptions make it obvious, that tuṇaṅkai dance has two facets; (i) dance by women dancers linking their mutual fingers and (ii) war dance is in a similar way, by the soldiers after victory, sometimes Kings also taking active part.

Himalayas :

The Himalayas are referred to in two poems[76] as the abode of the Aryas, where there were 'murukka' trees and green swards with gazelles frolicking and grazing.[77] Paraṇar mentions

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70. -do- II : 3 : 5; V : 5 : 12; VI : 2 : 13–16; VI : 7 : 4; VIII : 7 : 3–4.
71. -do- II : 3 : 5.
72. -do- V : 5 : 10–12.
73. -do- VI : 7 : 4.
74. -do- VIII : 7 : 3–4.
75. -do- VI : 2 : 13–16.
76. -do- II; 1 : 21–23; V : 3 : 6–7.
77. -do- II : 1 : 21–23.

that the Himalayas, the abode of gods and the place where sages are steeped in contemplation as situated to the far north of Tamil Nadu.[78]

Kumari:

Kumari is mentioned as the southernmost point of Tamil Nadu,[79] whenever Himalayas are referred to as the northern limit.

Poet Kumaṭṭūr-k-Kaṇṇaṉār says, that among the kings of the country extending from the Himalayas to Kumari, Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñcēralātaṉ was a matchless hero.[80] Paraṇar refers to Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ as having vanquished all the rulers speaking different languages in the country from the Himalayas to Kumari and brought with him the insignias of their royalty.[81]

Gods:

(i) *Murugan*

Lord Murugan is referred to, in the first poem of the second decad of the Patiṟṟuppattu, as having defeated 'Surapadma.' Lord Murugan is described, as having rooted out the mango tree which represented the shape of that Surapadma, the Lord of the asuras took and Muruga rode on victoriously on his elephant.

(ii) *Tirumāl:*

The fourth decad contains a poem, describing the worship of Tirumāl. The pilgrims join together with folded hands and raise a joint chorus about Tirumāl. Then, the temple bell rings, which is the signal for the fasting devotees to take their bath in the cool waters of the temple-tank. They come back and fall

78. -do- IV : 3 : 6-7.
79. -do- II : 1 : 24-25; V : 3: 8.
80. -do- II : 1 : 24.
81. -do- V : 3 : 8.
82. -do- II : 1 : 16.

flat at the feet of god wearing 'basil' garlands and holding the Divine Disc. Then, the devotees go back to their homes with satisfaction of having fulfilled their vows.[83]

Demons :

Sangham age also believed in the existence of devils and there are references to an imp of devil in two poems.[84] When fertile lands are laid desolate by invading armies, thorny shrubs ('Viṭatērai' and 'Ūṭai' trees) grow apace and become infested with ugly imps riding on asses with dry and ruddy hair on their split heads.[85] The second reference is, to a desolate battle-fields full of fallen soldiers with limbs torn apart, and of headless bodies with ravens hovering above. On such fields, was witnessed the shocking sight of devils sturting about with dishevelled hair, teeth protruding from wide open mouths, heaving pouches and wide whirling eyelids striking terror into the hearts of the onlookers.[86]

Knowledge of the planetary positions :

That the people of the Sangham Age were able to calculate the planetary movements etc., is referred to, in Patirruppattu where we have three references to this aspect.[87] (i) When Mars and Venus do not join, rains come in at proper time and place.[88] (ii) Venus, the brightest of the planets, rises not exactly in the east but a little to the north, and gives heavy rains.[89] (iii) The confluence of Venus with some planets, gives plentiful rains, leading to rich harvests.[90]

83. -do- IV : 1 : 1-10.
84. -do- II : 3 : 12-16; VII : 7 : 8-11.
85. -do- II : 3 : 12-16.
86. -do- VII : 7 : 8-11.
87. -do- II : 3 : 25-26; 4 : 23-25; VII : 9 : 13-17.
88. -do- II : 3 : 25-26.
89. -do- III : 4 : 23-25.
90. -do- VII : 9 : 13-17.

Overseas Trade:

Tamil people of those days had maritime. trade with the Mediterranean sea-board, and countries of East Asia and China. There is a reference in Patiṟṟuppattu to a merchant-vessel being repaired after a voyage.[91]

Customs and manners:

Toddy drinking was a common habit. They used to barter tusks of elephants, brought from victorious battles, for toddy. They had their fill of toddy until they forgot themselves and felt like people in heaven.[92] Aricil-Kiḻār says in one poem, that the booty of millet and horsegram, got by the inhabitants of wet lands from the inhabitants of dry lands, is exchanged by them for toddy.[93]

Sacrifices:

Patiṟṟuppattu says, that Celva-k-Kaṭuṅkō Vāḻiyātaṉ performed a sacrifice to celebrate victory in battle.[94] In another place, there is a reference to a sacrifice by King Peruñcēral Irumpoṟai, for the sake of begetting children. The royal couple dressed in deer skin performed the sacrifice. As a result of this sacrifice, got a child for royal duties — so says Aricil Kiḻār.[95]

Disposal of the Dead:

The practice of cremation and burial of the dead was prevalent. The fact, that the kings were buried in the earthern-urns, is referred to, in the fourth decad.[96]

There are several other references to the customs and manners of people of the Cēra Country in Patiṟṟuppattu. So far, we have gleaned from our study, the conditions of society in the age of Patiṟṟuppattu.

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91. -do- VIII : 6 : 4–5.
92. -do- VII : 8 : 9–14.
93. -do- VIII : 5 : 8–10.
94. -do- VII : 10 : 12–14.
95. -do- VIII : 4 ; 10–17.
96. -do- V : 4 : 17–23.

5. LITERARY MERITS OF PATIRRUPPATTU

The entire anthology of Patirruppattu deals with the Cēras. It consists of ten decads, each composed by a different poet. Each decad pertains to a particular Cēra king. The names of the persons who compiled the treatise and the person at whose instance the collection was done could not be ascertained. Of the ten decads, the first and the last have been lost.

Each decad has appended to it, a Patikam, which contains the information about the poet who composed the decad, the king who is the hero of the decad, the heroic exploits of the king and the reward, the poet got for composing the song. Scholars believe with sufficient reasons, that the Patikams should have come into existence some time after the period of the compiler of the anthology and before that of the commentator. All the decads are of the nature of 'Meykkīrttis' (the panegyrics found in the inscriptions) in construction. There is an old commentary on Patirruppattu available, but the authorship of the commentary is not traceable. This commentary is found very useful, for appreciating the literary value of the composition.

Some verses are incomplete; and in some verses words are missing. The ten verses in the fourth decad are in the 'Antāti' type of compostion. That is, the ending letter or syllable or foot of the last line of a stanza as identical with the first letter, syllable or foot of the following stanza, the sequence being maintained between the foregoing and the following stanzas as well. For each song, a particular rhythm (vaṇṇam) and a pause determining the metrical nature of a verse (tūkku) are assigned. Patirruppattu songs appear to have been set to music and they are very popular.

During the period of the Cēra monarchs, who figure as the heroes of Patirruppattu poems, the piracy of the Kadambas was put down; and the boundaries of the Cēra country extended upto Vāṇa Nādu in the North. The Cēras wielded suzerainty over the Koṅgus and the Colās on the east:

The Cēra monarchs not only exercised a parental care over their subjects, but also promoted their cultural pursuits.

Patiṟṟuppattu is richer in ideas and descriptive treatments than any other work of the Eṭṭuttokai collection. The eight poets of the collection appear to vie with as it were, one another in presenting a most accomplished, artistic and resonant piece of poem possible. Prof. T. P. Meenakshisundaram Pillai has offered the following remarks on Patiṟṟuppattu.

"The Sangham poets caught the spirit of the poetic moment and enshrined it in the most appropriate and correct poetic phrase, afraid of spoiling its effect by an elaboration. Brevity is the life of their poetry. This explains, why the anthologies of the caṅkam verses are arranged according to the length of verses as 'Kuṟun tokai', 'Neṭun tokai', 'Aiṅkuṟunūṟu' etc. In every poem there is the heart of life centre – a beautiful phrase which is the very quintessence of the poem, and this phrase, by common acceptance and appreciation, becomes, according to Caṅkam usage, the very name of the verse. This is seen, in every one of the verses in the present work."[1]

An important catch-word or phrase occurring in a poem expressing its quintessence has been adopted as its title. This embellishment compels us to contemplate on the artistry and the imagination displayed in each of the poems. The title, 'Kayiṟu kuṟu mukavai' chosen for the second verse of the third decad by Pālai-k-Kautamaṉār is an illustration to the point. We have a description of the heroic exploits of the Cēra king, Palyāṉai-c-cel keḷu Kuṭṭuvaṉ. He leads an expedition into the Koṅgu country, which is a rocky plateus, noted for its perpetual scarcity of water. The Koṅgu people were strong and industrious, and toiled and moiled to extract that precious little water, the deep wells they had sunk could yield. They used a tiny scoop, tied to a long rope to draw the water from the bottom of the well, with which the Koṅgu people had coaxed mother earth with resolution and application to feed them and their flourishing cattle. The little bailer had been

1. Foreword to Prof. Auvai S. Duraisami Pillai's edition of Patiṟṟuppattu. p. 8.

chiefly responsible for lifting the water from the bowels of the earth to the surface and for making the land smile with lush vegetation and golden crops.[2] The caption of the verse, 'Kayiṟu Kuṟu mukavai' which means the 'rope and the tiny scoop' is, therefore, appropriate and telling.

Patiṟṟuppattu - a string of stage-sets:

Every verse of Patiṟṟuppattu stages a melo-drama. The poets of the anthology would appear to be experts in dramaturgy. Kākkaipāṭiṉiyār Nac-ceḷḷaiyār takes us to the sanctum of the palace of Āṭukōṭ-pāṭṭu-c-cēralātaṉ. "A family quarrel is brewing between the monarch and his consort. He has returned home late in the night and was reported to have been dancing 'tuṇaṅkai-k-kūttu' earlier on the village-common clasping the hands of pretty women. His wife received him coldly and sulked. Her heart fluttered; her slender frame shivered; her lips quivered; her anklets jingled the louder and faster. She would have aimed a little red lily at him but restrained. The king kept placid; and showed a smile of conciliation. His shining eyes betrayed his burning love for her. He begged his beloved wife for the gift of the red lily to him, he had never known what it was to beg. The queen was unyielding. She asked him "Who are you unto me"? and strutted away."[3]

Only a woman can comprehend a woman. It was but pertinent that Nac-ceḷḷaiyār should have handled this dainty, tender and refined theme of the love-quarrel between the royal couple.

DESCRIPTION OF NATURE

Treatment of nature in Patiṟṟuppattu is not a whit colourless than in the other Sangham works. Pālai-k-kautamaṉār exhibits a flair for the description of nature. His depiction of a Marutam is superb. In one of his songs, comprising the third

2. Patiṟṟup; III : 2.
3. -do- VI : 2.

decad of Patirruppattu, he manifests an intimate and deep appreciation of a picture·que country town. Tall 'marutam' (Terminalia arjuna) trees dot the verdant plains. Birds nesting on its branches chirp and chatter. Beautiful maidans pick the blossoms and the green shoots of 'Kāñci' (River portia) trees and play around on the sandy stretches. The 'murukkam' trees have shed their flaming red blooms on the ground. The Chanks crawl. Storks and Cranes flutter about. Red lotus bloosoms are scattered all over the flooded paddy-fields. The white water-lilies untouched by the romping damsels spread out everywhere.

The rhyme and rhythm:

The poetry of Patirruppattu was intended to be sung to music. Particular attention has, therefore, been paid to assonance, rhythm and cadence, in their composition. Many of these poems contain catchy lines, moving in tune with the ebb and flow of our emotions.

The Word Power:

The words employed in the poems appear intact and unaffected by the metrical requirements. Admixture of Sanskrit words is very little. As usual with the Sangham classics, Patirruppattu abounds in similes. This kind of figure of speech has been handled in this classic on more than eighty-five occasions,[5] and may be found to conform to the four categories into which

4. -do- III : 3 : 18–25.

5. -do- I; 1 : 7–9; 2 : 3–4; II; 1 : 1; 1 : 6; 1 : 9–10; 2 : 5–7; 3 : 11–12; 4 : 7 : 4 : 18–20; 5 : 39 : 6 : 2; III : 1 : 4; 1 : 34–35; 1 : 17; 3 : 23–24; 4 : 21–22; 5 : 11; 6 : 13–14; 10 : 2; 10 : 27; IV : 1 : 20; 1 : 27–28; 5 : 7 : 8; 6 : 5–6; 9 : 5–6; V : 1 : 20–21 : 2 : 3–4; 3 : 3–4; 3 : 18–19; 4 : 1–2; VI : 1 : 1 : 2; 1 : 35–36; 2 : 3–4; 8 : 4; 9 : 5–7; VII : 1 : 3; 1 : 4; 1 : 5–6; 1 : 7–18; 2 : 1–2; 2 : 10; 4 : 12–14; 4 : 17; 5 : 8; 5 : 14–16; 6 : 4; 6 : 12–13; 9 : 1–2; 9 : 3–4; 9 : 11–12; 10 : 24–25; 10 : 26–27 : VIII : 1 : 23–24; 2 : 6–7; 2 : 14–15; 4 : 3; 4 : 9; 6 : 4–5; 6 : 12–13; 7 : 10–11; 8 : 1–2; 8 : 12–14; 8 : 18–19; 10 : 13; 10 : 3–4; IX : 1 : 26; 1 : 19; 1 : 1–3; 4 : 1–3; 4 : 11–13; 5 : 4–6; 8 : 28–30; 8 : 35; 8 : 37–38; 8 : 32–33; 9 : 19–20; 10 : 12–18; 10 : 31; 10 : 33–35 : 10 : 47; 10 : 56.

simile has been classified by Tolkāppiyaṉār. These four categories are 'viṉai' (comparison of action), 'payaṉ' (comparison of effect), 'mey' (comparison of form) and 'uru' (comparison of colour).[6]

A few examples of the employment of all these categories of simile in Patiṟṟuppattu may be found relavant, to illustrate the literary elegance of the work.

'Viṉai' (Comparison of action):

The king-fisher pecks at a fish with its long sharp beak and flies away and looks like the swift plying of the needle while suturing the war-wounds of the veterans.[7] The mountain waves break on the coast, loud as thunder.[8] The sudden and irreparable destruction, caused to an enemy country by the warriors, is comparable to the precipitate crashing of a thunder-bolt.[9] The deep booming of the war drums is compared to a loud thunder clap.[10] The war-whirl like hurricanes.[11] The Cērā king returns to his country, with the tribute extracted from his enemies, as the god of death returns extracting the life from the bodies.[12] The slender bright ribbon of water cascading down the hill, appears like a tender climber shivering in the winds.[13] The highwaymen are comparable to the terrific god of death.[14]

'Payaṉ' (Comparison of effect):

The places, at which the Cērā monarch heaped death and destruction, would appear like bodies with life extinct.[15] The

6. Tol; Uvama Iyal: 1.
7. Patiṟṟup; V : 2 : 3–4.
8. -do- VI : 1 : 1–2.
9. -do- VI : 8 : 4.
10. -do- IV : 6 : 4.
11. -do- VIII : 10 : 13.
12. -do- VIII : 1 : 23–24.
13. -do- III : 5 : 11,
14. -do- III : 6 : 13–14.
15. -do- II : 3 : 11–12.

generosity of the Cērā monarch is comparable to that of Akkuraṉ.[16] The Cērā king is as celebrated as Tirumāl.[17] The physical charms of Cēra Mā Devi are like those of Aruntati.[18]

'Mey' (Comparison of form):

The wide, coral eyes of the maids look like fresh blown flowers.[19] The arms of the maids are plumpy like a piece of bamboo;[20] the arms of the warriors are stone-hard as a 'Kanaiya' tree.[21] The legs of the elephants, remind us of the wooden ponders.[22] The ramparts of the fortress are as magnificient and high as the mountains.[23] The huge elephants look like dark hills.[24]

'Uru' (Comparison of colour):

The blood and the flesh of the torn and crushed bodies of the enemies strewn about the battle-field, appear like the scarlet saffron paste.[25] The red lotus in bloom, shines like flaming fire.[26] The bloody field of battle, looks like the purple evening sky.[27] The war-horses possess manes flaming red, as fire.[28]

These and other embellishments, simple yet telling, are the special features, which distinguish Patiṟṟuppattu as one of the finest literary creations of all times.

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16. -do- II : 4 : 7.
17. -do- II : 5 : 39.
18. -do- IV : 1 : 28.
19. -do- III : 1 : 35.
20. -do- III : 1 : 37.
21. -do- IV : 1 : 20.
22. -do- V : 3 : 3.
23. -do- VII : 2 : 10.
24. -do- VII : 9 : 1.
25. -do- II : 1 : 9–10.
26. -do- III : 3 : 23.
27. -do- IV : 5 : 7–8.
28. -do- I : 2 : 3.

ETTUTTOKAI

1. NARRIṆAI

Naṟṟiṇai is an anthology of four hundred poems; each of them consisting of nine to twelve lines. It deals with the theme of love. This anthology was compiled at the instance of a Pāṇḍiyā king called Paṉṉāṭu-tanta-Pāṇḍiyaṉ Māraṉ Vaḻuti. The name of the poet, who was responsible for the compilation, is not known. The poets of Naṟṟiṇai have left us faithful and impressive descriptions of nature: In these verses we frequently meet with observations on high moral values.

Of the four hundred verses contained in Naṟṟiṇai, twenty-two relate to the Cērās.[1]

Historical information furnished by Naṟṟiṇai :

Though Naṟṟiṇai deals entirely with amorous themes, it, however, provideds us, with ample material for an assessment of the political, social and cultural aspects of the society. Naṟṟiṇai, like Puṟanāṉūṟu, is again free from too much of literary ornamentations, and hence served as a reliable source of information on the life of ancient Tamils.

Naṟṟiṇai contains references to ancient town like Tondi,[2] Māntai,[3] and to the Cērā kings and feudatories, Cērāmāṉ Kaṇaikkāl Irumporai,[4] Kuṭṭuvaṉ Cēral,[5] Uṭiyaṉ, Cēral,[6] Poṟaiyaṉ,[7]

1. Naṟ; 8, 9, 18, 35, 48, 105, 113, 118, 167, 185, 195, 202, 224, 237, 256, 318, 337, 346, 381, 384, 391 and 395.
2. -do- 8 : 9; 18 : 4; and 195 : 5.
3. -do- 35 : 7.
4. -do- 18 : 2–5.
5. -do- 105 : 7–8.
6. -do- 113 : 9–11.
7. -do- 185 : 6–7 and 346 : 8–9.

Kuṭṭuvaṉ,[8] Aṇṭiran,[9] Neṭumāṉ Añci[10] and Naṉṉaṉ[11] are referred to in Naṟṟiṇai. In one of the verses, we have an allusion to the famous Kolli-p-pāvai, Siren of the Kolli hills.[12]

The Cērā kings were noted for their unlimited generosity. Some of the verses of Naṟṟiṇai bear evidence to the unsparing gifts of elephants and horses, which the kings showered on the poets and minstrels.[13]

Habits and customs of the people:

The art of painting was not unknown to the ancient Tamils and a verse in Naṟṟiṇai contains an indication to that effect.[14] The people of the Cērā country had been observing the 'Kārttikai' festival, as is done even today, on the day when the moon was in conjunction with the asterism Kārttikai, by decorating their homes with several rows of lighted oil lamps.[15]

Description of Nature:

Description of nature is afforded a full scope in Naṟṟiṇai. The poets have made minute observations of animate and inanimate objects in nature and have communicated them, to us, in simple and delightful words. The carry us into the dense forests of the Cērā country and to the hills and dales swarming with tigers, elephants[16] and deer[17] and a host of other animals and birds.[18] They regale us with their thrilling descriptions of dark

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8. -do- 393 : 4–5.
9. -do- 167 : 2–4 and 237 : 7–8.
10. -do- 381 : 6–9.
11. -do- 391 : 5–7.
12. -do- 185 : 3–10.
13. -do- 185 : 3–4.
14. -do- 118 : 7–8.
15. -do- 202 : 9.
16. -do- 18 : 8–10 and 202 : 1–7.
17. -do- 256 : 6–11.
18. -do- 9 : 10–12.

implications and suggestive meanings, are found copiously employed in this collection. A classic example of this kind of simile, can be found to have been handled by Ammūvaṉār in one of his beautiful verses included in this anthology. "On an embankment of sand thrown by the rolling waves of the sea, dark plums of the 'nāval' (jambolana) tree are found strewn about. The honey-bees mistaking them for creatures of their own kind swarm around them. A sea-crab, in turn, mistakes the bees for 'nāval' fruits and surrounds them with its arms. A crane flying by, sights the crab and swoops on it. The bees are saved".[29] The implied suggestion contained in this simile is, that the lady-love (the nāval fruit) surrounded by her lady-companions (the honey-bees) is confined to her home by her relations (the crab) but is saved in time, by her lover (the crane) and married by him.

In one of the couplets of Tirukkuṟaḷ Tiruvaḷḷuvar presents to us a lover woefully complaining to his companion that his lady love who started the love-pangs in his heart could be the only cure for the affliction.[30] The wail of this young man, is found echoing, in one of the verses of Naṟṟiṇai.[31]

29. -do- 35 : 1-6.

30. Kuraḷ; 1102.

31. Naṟ; 384 : 9-11.

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30. Kuṟaḷ; 1102.

31. Naṟ; 384 : 9-11.

2. KURUNTOKAI

Kuṟuntokai comprises of four hundred poems, all composed in Akaval metres.[1] They range from four to eight lines in length. Kuṟuntokai is considered to be the earliest of all the anthologies that make up Eṭṭuttokai. There are valid reasons for the assumption. Compositions from some of the Kuṟuntokai poets appear also in some other Saṅgham classics. In those works, poets, are indicated by a word or a phrase or a theme they had employed in their Kuṟuntokai songs. For example, the poetess, Nac-ceḷḷaiyār has addressed a crow in her only poem included in Kuṟuntokai.[2] From this she appears to have earned the appeallation 'Kākkai-pāṭiṉiyār', 'she who has sung on a crow'. By this appellation, she is indicated in Patiṟṟuppattu. Similarly, one Kīraṉār has sung of a honey-bee in his verse included in Kuṟuntokai.[3] His songs find place in Naṟṟiṇai[4] and Puṟanāṉūṟu.[5] In those works, he is pointed out as 'Tumpi-cēr-Kīraṉār', (Kīraṉār who has included 'tumpi' in his verse). Again, three kinds of metres have been employed in the composition of the Eṭṭu-t-tokai anthologies. They are Āciriyappā, Kalippā and Paripāṭal, whoever was responsible for the compilation of Eṭṭu-t-tokai has, according to Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Aiyar, certainly followed a definite principle for his guidance. First, all the poems on the theme of love done in Akaval metres, have been collected and classified into three categories according to the maximum and minimum number of lines they contain. Kuṟuntokai verses, the shortest of all should have, therefore, been taken up for compilation in the first place. These two instances demonstrate the antiquity of the Kuṟuntokai collection.[6]

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1. Blank verse.
2. Kuṟu; 210.
3. -do- 392.
4. Naṟ: 277.
5. Puṟa: 249.
6. Kuṟuntokai edition; Foreword p. 10.

The invocatory hymn of Kuruntokai has been contributed by 'Peruntēvaṉār' who sang Bharatam.' This hymn is on Lord Muruga. Pūrikkō was responsible for the compilation of the anthology, but the compiler is not known. Kuruntokai includes contributions from two hundred and five poets. The names of the authors of ten of them, could not be ascertained. The commentators on the Sangham classics, have more profusely quoted from Kuruntokai than from any other work. Two hundred and thirty-five out of the four hundred verses of this collection, have earned this distinction.

Kuruntokai provides us with a window, through which we can peep into the life of the ancient Tamils especially in its social and cultural aspects. Their domestic life forms a major theme of the compositions. While the anthology depicts the domestic set up of young men and women settled to taste the conjugal bliss, it prescribes also by the way, certain standards or common ethical codes for all to follow. These codes are as valid today as they had been then.

Kuruntokai does not deal with the 'mutar-poruḷ', time and place and the 'karu-p-poruḷ' things useful for the day to-day life of the people such as god, food, the flora and the fauna, occupation etc. as profusely as, for example, the Akanāṉūru. But they have not also been ignored completely, as in Tirukkuraḷ.

Eighty-seven of the four hundred verses deal with the flora and fauna of the country, twenty-five with the princely givers, six with mountains, two about the rivers and nine about places. The poets have given us a very intimate characterisation of them all. The themes of love and domestic life have been dealt with very delicately; and they display a deep, psychological insight, the poets have had into the complicated human sentiments and relationships. Practice of virtues, acquisition of wealth, pursuit of conjugal pleasures and enquiry into the life beyond, have been touched here and there in the anthology with implied lessons on moral conduct. Simile, the simplest of the figures of speech, has employed on one hundred and seventy-four occasions.

We meet with reference to the Cērā country, in twenty-four verses of Kuruntokai.[7]

Literary excellences of Kuruntokai

The contribution of the poets, Kolli-k-kaṇṇaṉ,[8] Cēramāṉ-Entai,[9] Pālai-pātiya-Peruṅkaṭuṅkō,[10] Mōci-kīraṉār,[11] Paraṇar[12] and Kuṉṟiyaṉār[13] excite our imagination. We travel along with them and admire with them the exquisite charms of the lady-love, fragrance enveloping her delicate frame.

References to historical events.

As the poems of Kuruntokai are all very short ones limited to four to eight lines, there has been no much scope for narrating in them, long historical episodes. However, we have short references to the heroism exhibited by the warriors of the Cēra monarch Kuṭṭuvaṉ,[14] the chivalry of Eliṉi,[15] a Cēra chieftain, and the liberality of Āy[16] and Atiyamāṉ Añci.[17]

The feminine sports:

Women danced 'Kuravai-k-kūttu.'[18] Auvaiyār, the celebrated woman poet has waxed eloquent over the beautiful concubines singing and dancing or sporting in the freshes of the rushing streams.[19]

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7. Kuru: 16, 22, 31, 34, 37, 80, 84, 89, 91, 109, 124, 128, 135. 137, 166 179, 209, 231, 238, 243, 262, 268, 283 and 398.
8. -do- 34 : 6–7.
9. -do- 22 : 3–5.
10. -do- 209 : 4–7.
11. -do- 84 : 3–5.
12. -do- 89 : 4–7.
13. -do- 238 : 4–5.
14. -do- 34 : 4–7.
15. -do- 80 : 4–7.
16. -do- 84 : 3–5.
17. -do- 91: 5–8.
18. -do- 31.
19. -do- 80;: 1–3.

The Elephant:

The Elephant has, of course, earned as usual the admiration of the poets. Whereas poets usually extolled its huge form, invincible might and prowess in wars, in Kuṟuntokai, elephants are presented to us, from a different angle, loving their mates affectionately, doing them odd services, and reminding human beings of the duty, they owe, to their partners in life.[20]

The Pālai-tract:

The Pālai-tract is represented to be a barren land, scorched by the sun and devoid of water.[21] Charitable people have planted Nelli (Myrobalam) trees on both sides of the path-ways so that the travellers may slake their thirst with the sweet fruits of the trees.[22] The Pālai-tract is infested with robbers and highwaymen, who had no compunction in waylaying unwary travellers and killing them.[23] Peruṅkaṭuṅkō, a Royal poet, appears to have evinced a special interest in singing on Pālai. Therefore, he was called the poet 'who has sung on Pālai'.

Figures of speech:

There are ten poems in Kuṟuntokai,[24] in which the faculty of keen observation, which the poets were gifted with, has been exhibited. The comparisons made are apt and ornate. Pālai–pāṭiya Peruṅ-kaṭuṅkō compares carnal passion that clouds the powers of one's discrimination to an arrow that darts to a long distance only to dip down its ultimate destruction.[25]

Ideals:

The men-folk held their profession as dear to them as their own life. Women considered their husbands, as the breath of

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20. -do- 37 : 2–4.
21. -do- 262 : 6.
22. -do- 209 : 1–4.
23. -do- 283 : 5–8.
24. -do- 16, 80, 89, 91, 128, 243, 262, 283 and 398.
25. -do- 231 : 4–6.

their life.[26] One, who lives on his ancestral property, commanded no respect from others. He should earn and subsist.[27] A young man thinks, that if he has to suffer a bitter period of separation from his wife, it must be on those days, when no supplicants go to them for charity.[28] Here is an instance of the ancient Tamil people setting a very high value on the virtue of charity towards the needy.

Customs and habits :

Women hated separation from their beloved husbands.[29] Young women lit oil lamps in their homes in the evenings.[30] The hunters took their hunting hounds along with them, while they went a hunting.[31] The salt merchants travelled in groups.[32]

The theme of love :

We are amazed at the deftness and artistry with which the Kuruntokai poets have woven any theme of love they had chosen to handle. Several examples can be quoted to show the depth of their knowledge of human sentiments, fears and pleasures, despairs and fulfilments. Karuvūr-c-Cēramāṉ Cāttaṉ delights us, with a beautiful description of a young girl in love. "It was dead of night. The maid knew, that her lover was waiting in tryst beyond a hedge near her house. She could not consent to his leaving her then for fear of the nocturnal risks on the way; nor could she ask him, when he would be back to her arms. She stood dumb-founded."[33]

Kuruntokai abounds in the depiction of such poignant situations.

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26. -do- 135 : 1-2.
27. -do- 283 : 1-4.
28. -do- 137.
29. -do- 124 : 2-4.
30. -do- 398 : 2-6.
31. -do- 199 : 1-2.
32. -do- 124 : 1-2.
33. -do- 268.

3. AIṄKUṞUNŪṞU

This collection of five hundred verses, deals with the five aspects of love relating to the five classes of land, the Marutam, the Neytal, the Kuṟiñci, the Pālai and the Mullai. Of the five hundred verses the first hundred were composed by Oram Pokiyar on Marutam, the second hundred by Ammūvaṉār on Neytal, the third by Kapilar on Kuṟiñci, the fourth by Ōtalāntaiyār on Pālai and the fifth by Pēyaṉār on Mullai.

All the five hundred poems have been written in Akaval metres. The length of the poems ranges from three to six lines. Each hundred is divided into ten decads. Each decad is based on a separate theme and self-containing. Each decad is named after the theme dealt with, or a word or phrase contained in any one of the ten verses, or by the theme as well as words. For example, one decad bears the title "insistence by the lady-companion" (தோழி வற்புறுத்த பத்து) which is the theme it deals with. Another decad called 'Maññai-p-pattu'[2] (மஞ்ஞைப் பத்து) derives its name from the word 'Maññai' contained in some of the verses included in it. There are decads, entitled, 'Desired-ten.'[3] (வேட்கைப் பத்து) 'Mother-ten'.[4] (அன்னாய்ப் பத்து) These names are based on the themes, as well as words occurring in the verses.

The Aiṅkuṟunūṟu has been anthologised by the poet, Pula-t-tuṟai muṟṟiya-kūṭalūr kiḻār at the instance of the Cērā monarch, Yāṉaikkat-Cēy-Māntaraṉ-Cēral Irumpoṟai. We derive this information, from an old note appended to this anthology.

The poets of Aiṅkuṟunūṟu are past masters in their trade. In a few short words, they could create characters, full of life and energy, and feature them magnificeintly in the parts assigned

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1. Aiṅ; mullai : 7th Ten.
2. -do- Kuṟiñci; 10th Ten.
3. -do- marutam 1st Ten.
4. Aiṅ; kuṟiñci 2nd Ten.

to them. The poems contained in the anthology are all literary gems displaying many facets of noble thoughts and sentiments.

The first decad of the hundred verses on Marutam deals with domestic-quarrels. The first ten 'Vēṭkai-p-pattu' praises Ātan Aviṉi, a Cērā king.

The husband lives with a harlot. The wife languishes for want of his company and love, but does not rebuke him or curse for his infidelity towards her. On the other hand, her mother (தாய்) expresses her best wishes to everybody. She calls for many happy returns to the king that he may not fail in his royal duties; she prays for timely rains and bumper harvests that she may entertain her guests without strain; she wants more and more gold that she may shower gifts on the poets, minstrels and men in want; and she supplicates for freedom from hunger and disease. Instances of such rare sentiments can be multiplied.[5]

Employment of 'Uḷḷuṟai uvamam' or the implied simile is a special feature in the poems of Aiṅkuṟunūṟu. Such a simile is necessary, for a clear presentation of the aspects of love, on the five tiṇais or classification of land and mode of life. An implied simile may have a bearing upon the distinctive regional features of a 'tiṇai' such as its flora and fauna, professions of people, the type of melody prevalent etc., in a particular tiṇai.[6] Ōrampōkiyār has employed a beautiful implied simile in a verse included in the first decad of poems relating to Marutam. The lady-companion of the lady-love, lamenting on the lapses of the husband of her mistress refers to him, as belonging to the place, where the blue water-lilies blossom side by side with the neytal, a kind of white water-lily, which is of lesser value. Thereby, she implies that he shares his devotion equally between his wedded wife and his mistress.[7]

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5. do marutam; Vēṭkai-p-pattu.

6. Tol; Akatiṇai-iyal : 47 and 48.

7. Aiṅ; marutam; Vēṭkai-p-pattu : 2.

'Iṟaicci' is another poetic embellishment relating to Akam themes. It is a suggested meaning conveyed indirectly by reference to the distinctive features of the tract of land. Tolkāppiyaṉār has framed rules for its employment in literature.[9] The same poet Ōrampōkiyār furnishes us a fine example of Iṟaicci. The husband, who finds happiness in the arms of a harlot, is said to belong to a place, where sugarcane, which has flowered and become useless, is found growing side by side with the stocks of paddy that flower and bear fruit.[10]

When there had been poets to sing such poems of exquisite sentiments and implied morals, we can generally conclude, that the people of their times were learned and cultured enough to understand the compositions and enjoy them and also to honour the poets who had provided them with such a literary fare of unrivalled taste.

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8. Tamil Lexicon; Vol. I, p. 366.
9. Tol; Poruḷ; Poruḷiyal: 35 and 36.
10. Aiṅ; marutam; Vēṭkai-p-pattu: 4.

4. KALITTOKAI

Kalittokai is one of the eight antholigies included in Eṭṭuttokai. The poems comprising the collection, are in Kalippā metres. Hence, the name Kalittokai. According to Tolkāppiyaṉār, Kalippā and Paripāṭal are two of the metrical varieties prescribed for the poems relating to love themes.[1]

The anthology consists of one hundred and fifty poems including the invocatory hymn, all being available in their complete form. This number is confirmed by Pērāciriyar[2] and the commentator of Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ.[3] The authorship of this anthology is attributed to Nallantuvaṉār. It is not known at whose instance the compilation was undertaken.

Kalittokai has been divided into five sections, each one devoted to one of the five 'tiṇais' and taking its name after it. These sections are, therefore, referred to as 'Pālaikkali,' 'Kuṟiñcikkali,' 'Marutakkali,' 'Mullaikkali' and 'Neytaṟkali' in literature. An anonymous poem in veṇpā metre ascribes Pālaikkali to Peruṅkaṭuṅkō, Kuṟiñcikkali to Kapilar, Marutakkali to Marutaṉiḷanākaṉār and Neytaṟkali to Nallantuvaṉār.[4] Thiru C. V. Damodaran Pillai, a Ceylonese scholar, who edited Kalittokai in 1887, has called it 'Nallantuvaṉār Kalittokai.' Prof. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai questions the authenticity of the anonymous 'veṇpā' and is of the opinion that the entire treatise of Kalittokai had been written by Nallantuvaṉār himself and not by five different poets.[5] He supports his claim on the literary style of

1. Tol ; Poruḷ ; Akattiṇai iyal : 53.
2. Tol ; Poruḷ ; Ceyyuliyal : 149, 153, 154 and 160 commentary.
3. I-Akapporuḷ : 1.
4. "பெருங்கடுங்கோன் பாலை கபிலன் குறிஞ்சி
மருதனிள நாகன் மருத—மருஞ்சோழ
னல்லுருத் திரன்முல்லை நல்லந் துவனெய்தல்
கல்விவலார் கண்ட கலி"
5. History of Tamil language and literature p. 27.

the composition, the mode of the treatment of the themes as well as the terms employed.

It is interesting to note, that none of the poems in Kalittokai contains any reference to the Cōḷas and the Cērās. All of them relate to the Pandiya king, the river Vaikai and Tirumaruta-Muṉṟuṟai and the famous Tamil sangham, the Academy of men of letters. This leads us to presume that the author might have belonged to the Pandiya country. Dr. M. Rajamanikkanar thinks likewise.[6]

The Pālai-k-kali which is attributed to Pālai-Pāṭiya-Peruṅkaṭuṅkō comprises of thirty-five verses. The name of the author suggests that he was a scion of the Cērā dynasty and Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Ayyar thinks that it might have been possible.[7] But Peruṅkaṭuṅkō's poems relate only to the Pandiya king, the river Vaikai, and the Tamil sangham.

Kalittokai differs from the other anthologies in many of the terms used, metrification and the treatment of the subject matter. It proceeds beyond the themes of ideal love and deals with also Kaikkiḷai, the unreciprocated love, and Peruntiṇai, the improper love between unequal persons.

The descriptions contained in this poetical treatise, are vivid and vigorous, and each of the poems contained in it, is a treasure house of literary charms. The raciness of the style and the diction and elegance of the terms employed mark out Kalittokai as a brilliant and distinctive contribution to Tamil literature. Pandit N. M. Venkataswami Nattar would call it, a unique creation in Tamil.[8]

Kalittokai abounds in the depiction of picturesque scenes of love and trysts.

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6. Tamiḻ moḻi Ilakkiya Varalāṟu—Caṅka Kalam p. 199.
7. Kuṟuntokai edition, Foreword p. 156.
8. Kali-t-tokai-c-Coṟpoḻivukaḷ : p. 11.

Palaikkali and references to Puranic lore.

Palai-k-kali contains many allusions to the Itihasas. The burning of the cities of the three demons by Siva, the God with three eyes and with fire in one of his hands, is one of the puranic episodes alluded to.[9] A lady-love is compared to Aruntati, a paragon of chastity.[10] Duryodana plotting to kill the Pandavas by setting fire to their residence contrived to be built of inflammable materials like lac and camphor,[11] the heroic exploit of Muruga who destroyed a Rakshasa who obstructed his way in the form of a huge mango tree,[12] and the donning of the plough as a weapon of destruction by Balarama, the elder brother of Krishna,[13] are all some of the references found enriching the literary piece.

References to the kings and wars:

There are not very many references to the king or the administrative set up or the political conditions of the times. The usual virtues and vices of a monarch are found spoken of. The truthfulness of Pandiya king,[14] his grief over the destruction of the enemy country,[15] his impartiality and justice,[16] his concern for the welfare of the people of the subject countries paying tributes to him;[17] the victorious king going round the town on elephants, horses or chariots in triumphant procession on his return to the capital,[18] the certain destruction and havoc the king would cause to the countries opposed to him,[19] and the

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9. P. Kali; 1 : 1-5 and 3 : 1-6.
10. -do- 1 : 21.
11. -do- 24 : 1-4.
12. -do- 26 : 15-16.
13. -do- 35 : 1.
14. -do- 34 : 24-25.
15. -do- 4 : 12.
16. -do- 7 : 15-17.
17. -do- 25 : 11-12.
18. -do- 30 : 9-10.
19. -do- 12 : 1.

mediatory or intercessional role the king may assume in respect of two kings engaged in a fierce hand to hand fight,[20] all these find mention in the Pālai-k-kali. Pālai-k-kali contains references to the despotic and tyrannous kings. The brute force of a king heeding to the counsels of his vicious ministers,[21] collection of taxes and levies through pitiless and arbitrary methods,[22] and the panic and dismay overwhelming a people subject to an inequitous monarch[23] are all condemned in Pālai-k-kali.

References to Madurai and Vaikai:

Madurai, the capital city of the Pandiya country, has been called by its another name 'Kūṭal',[24] and has been described as the place, where the hill of God Subramania stands,[25] and a place wherein impressive buildings,[26] several stories high, delighted the world.[27] The river 'Vaikai' has been mentioned as possessing sandy islets,[28] and fragrant sands[29] and as a resort to harlots.[30]

Habits and customs:

Separation between the hero and his lady-love for various reasons, was quite usual and frequent, and some times prolonged. In one case, the hero had to be away from his loved one for a long time to earn and acquire wealth. The lady-love was grief stricken. The lady-companion actually dissolved in tears. She knew, that, neither she, nor the lady-love, could withold him from his set purpose which was after all a laudable one. However, she was certain, that inauspicious days and birds of evil omen

20. -do- 23 : 11-13.
21. -do- 7 : 1-2.
22. -do- 9 : 5-7.
23. -do- 33 : 14-15.
24. -do- 26 : 12.
25. -do- 26 : 16.
26. -do- 30 : 25.
27. -do- 34 : 17.
28. -do- 34 : 9.
29. -do- 29 : 61.
30. -do- 26 : 30.

would make him change his mind.[31] Another instance relates to the belief in the call of the lizards and the flutter of the left eye bringing good news to women.[32] From this, we learn, that the ancient Tamils, in spite of the catholicity of their cultural and religious pursuits, was after all not exempt from blind faith and superstitions.

The warriors wore a shoulder band while in martial dress.[33] The Antaṇars carried with them a flask filled with water hanging from their shoulders; as well as a wooden trident and an umbrella.[34] They performed sacrifices.[35] A young lady-love would wish to call on her gods to protect her lover from the hazards of a thick jungle, while on his way to find a profession. The lady-companion would remind her that the virtue of chastity would not admit of worship of any deity but only her husband.[36] From this, it is to be inferred, that women evinced a very great regard for her lord even to the extent of substituting him for a god.

During amorous moments, a young man would paint figures with sandal paste on the shoulders and breasts of his beloved.[37] He would caress the soft flowing tresses of his dearest.[38]

There are references, in Kalittokai, to girls playing at building toy-houses of sand,[39] to the celebration of the festival of the God of love in the spring season;[40] to youngmen happy and sporting with the harlots,[41] to the lover sending a messenger

31. -do- 4 : 4-9.
32. -do- 10 : 20-22.
33. -do- 6 : 9-10.
34. -do- 8 : 1-4.
35. -do- 35 : 25-26.
36. -do- 15 : 18-22.
37. -do- 17 : 2-3.
38. -do- 20 : 6.
39. -do- 28 : 5.
40. -do- 29 : 13-14.
41. -do- 35 : 8-10.

to his loved one and the messenger being feasted by her,[42] and to the young men returning on chariots from victorious wars.[43]

Descriptions of Nature.

The Pālaikkali contains vivid descriptions of the terrors of the highway. The tracks scorched and charred by the hot sun appeared like the three demon cities burnt by the angry Siva.[44] The track, through which the lover was proceeding, is parched up. The water holes have dried up. The trees with their leaves and flowers are found withered along with the climbers twining around their trunks and their branches.[45] The elephant's tusks appear like huge ploughs breaking the sods.[46] Male-elephants allow the female-elephants and their calves to drink the little water available in the holes, and then only, they slake their thirst with what is left. A doe takes shelter in the shadow cast by a stag.[47] Leaves of trees cover the bodies of persons slaughtered by the highwaymen. Elephants search with their huge trunks for traces of water in the ponds.[48] Deers run after mirage. The rocks are hot and the elephants die of thirst.[49] Highway robbers grab the little that is available with the traveller and deal him death wounds in return.[50]

Pālai-k-kali does not lack in the depiction of the agreeable spring season. The honey-bees swarm around the newly blossomed flowers.[51] The fragrant flowers of certain trees distress the separated lovers but are pleasant to the lovers united.[52] The ponds and

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42. -do- 31 : 18-19.
43. -do- 33 : 22-24.
44. -do- 1 : 6-8.
45. -do- 2 : 8-9.
46. -do- : 7 : 3-6.
47. -do- 10 : 8-9; 12-13; 16 17.
48. -do- 11 : 1-7.
49. -do- 12 : 1-9.
50. -do- 14 : 7-9.
51. -do- 25 : 9.
52. -do- 25 : 1-8.

tanks are full; the trees are clothed with lush foliage;[53] the cuckoos coo.[54]

Depiction of natural phenomena such as the northern Wind, evening, night, etc.

The 'Utai', the cold northern wind, is mentioned in the Pālai-k-koli. It is a very cold winter wind.[55] The evenings dance to the tune of the humming bees.[56] The nights are lit with a large round moon.[57] The chilly breeze makes people shiver in their frames.[58]

The theme of love in Kali-t-tokai:

Pālai-k-kali deals with the theme of love in a most pleasant and fastidious manner. Separation between the lovers is the characteristic element of 'Pālai-t-tiṇai' The loved one could not bear the separation from her lover. Our hearts melt at her sufferings. She is a most beautiful young woman with a pleasing complexion,[59] lustrous forehead,[60] wide dark eyes[61] and a face resembling a pale full moon,[62] and adorned with choice gold ornaments.[63]

The lady-companion warns the hero, that the noble lady would not survive the separation from him. The hero informs his dearest of his impending separation from her. She is overwhelmed with grief. Her delicate frame languishes. Tears stream down, and could not be dammed. She is afflicted with an unbearable love-sickness.[64]

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53. do 32 : 1-8.
54. do 35 : 8-9.
55. do 28 : 12-13.
56. do 28 : 16-17.
57. do 28 : 20-21.
58. do 30 : 11-12.
59. do 26 : 10; 26 : 14; 14 : 12.
60. do 12 : 14; 34 : 12.
61. do 14 : 20; 26 : 17.
62. do 14 : 16.
63. do 12 : 10; 12 : 18; 15 : 9; 34 : 20.
64. do 2 : 1-5.

The lover has to leave his dear one in pursuit of an occupation to earn for himself and for her. She could not bear the separation. The lady-companion questions the lover, whether the pursuit of wealth could transcend love.[65] She administers to him, a bitter warning, that the mistress of his heart would never survive the separation.[66]

The lady-love would follow her lord, wherever he went. There could be no more happiness for her than keeping him company in his perilous pursuit for wealth.[67] Wealth can fetch evanescent pleasures; but can it restore a dead person to life.[68] The lover cannot stand this agony, any longer. He postpones his intention of leaving his love in pursuit of wealth. The lady-companion wishes, that the bangles worn by the lady love may become tight-fitting again, implying, thereby, that her limbs had wasted in separation.[69]

The lady-love begs her lord to take her along with him. The hero coaxes her to stay back, complimenting endearingly on her velvety feet that may not stand walking on the hard ground without getting sore, and on her tender complexion, that may lose its lustre in the fiery winds of 'pālai'.[70]

The hero comforts the lady-love saying that he wanted to frighten her with the risks of the grim 'Pālai' tract, not to leave her at home and go alone, but to see her natural charms enhanced by the shiver of her delicate frame while listening to his tales of horror.[71]

The lady-companion preaches a little sermen to the hero and trtes to prevent his going in search of wealth. She tells him

65. -do- 4 : 3-5.

66. -do- 3 : 23-25 ; 4 : 15.

67. -do- 5 : 9-11.

68. -do- 6 : 20-21.

69. -do- 9 : 21.

70. -do- 12 : 11-13 ; 12 : 17; 12 : 21.

71. -do- 12 : 25-27.

that youth and love are the twin sources of happiness. Those, to whom this kind of happiness is accessible, need not strive for any other pleasure.[72]

The lady-companion rebukes the hero for not being true to the sweet promises made by him to his lady-love in amorous moments, that he would never be separated from her, even for a short while; but he has chosen to leave the lady-love to the tender mercies of the village-folk given to idle gossips; and that she has now learnt that, after all, he was a bad boy.[73] The lady-companion drops a dark hint to the hero that, after the purpose of his risky journey across the dangerous 'pālai' is fulfilled, he should not enquire how his lady-love endured the separation lest he should be shocked with the news that she was dead.[74] The hero is reluctant to take his dear one along with him as her tender little feet may not stand the ruggedness of the pathway through the desert. But, the lady-love asks him suggestively whether he has not seen the cow following a bull inseparably along the track he was following.[75] But, the hero was supremely aware of the fact that 'occupation is the breath of one's life', and therefore, he had to suffer separation from his beloved.

The lady-love, separated from her lord, laments over her fate. She complains that she is as valueless as the palmyra leaf thrown away after drinking water from it, as desolate as a deserted village, and as graceless as the discarded bunch of flowers.[76] She would have lost her natural charms and would appear miserable.[77] She knows, that all her pleadings and all her prayers would not deflect her lord from his intentions; and gives him a send off with her best wishes and regards.[78]

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72. -do- 17 : 7-8.
73. -do- 18 : 1-6.
74. -do- 18 : 11-13.
75. -do- 19 : 21-23.
76. -do- 22 : 8-9; 22 : 10-11; 22 : 12-13.
77. -do- 25 : 10, 14, 18.
78. -do- 34 : 11, 15, 19.

The hero is walking along the scorched 'Pālai' track. He observes love and affection exhibited among certain animals. Very little water is available for the thirsty animals. A shallow pool of water is stirred up by a baby elephant which does not know the preciousness of water. The male elephant first urges the female elephant to drink the scanty water and then only he drinks it.[79] The dove protects its loved one from the cruel sun by covering it with its out-spread wings.[80] The bamboo grows hot. The doe takes shelter under the shadow cast by the stag.[81]

The lady-love languishes always doting on her hero who had left her intent on earning wealth.[82]

Kalittokai explains the affliction of love. The moment, the lover thinks of his love, his heart begins to pine.[83] The lady-love feels the affliction unbearable. But her lady-companion gently rebukes her, saying that similar would be case with the hero too.[84]

Elopement of young lovers also finds place as a theme in Kalittokai. The hero and his beloved elope one night. The foster-mother of the lady-love is after them. She meets with a Brahmin saint on the way, and enquires him whether he had noticed a young couple wending their way along the road. He answered in the affirmative but comforts her in a most philosophical, and at the same time in a most practical manner, that the girl's beauty and love are not for the gratification of the mother, even as the sandal wood cannot be enjoyable to the mountain, the pearl to the water, and the music to the 'yāl', their respective birth-places. Just as these things are useful, only to those, who could relish them, the company of the lady-love could no longer be enjoyable, to her mother but only to her

79. -do- 11 : 6-9.
80. -do- 11 : 10-13.
81. -do- 11 : 14-17.
82. -do- 28 : 10.
83. -do- 34 : 22.
84. -do- 27 : 22-23.

lover.[85] In this verse, me meet with a most knowing distinction drewn by the poet between the limits of a filial love and those of the conjugal love.

The lady-love worships no god but her husband.[86] The hero also would extol the virtues of his beloved before he leaves her to proceed in pursuit of wealth.[87] Her heart goes out to him even though she would like to smother it.[88]

The Spring peeps in as the messenger of love.[89] The lady-love is anxiously waiting for the return of her lord which has already been delayed inordinately.[90] Her anxious awaiting wastes her slender frame.[91]

The anxiety of the lady-love mounts up. She doubts whether her lover had forgotten to care for any more? Could he not have sent her a messenger in advance? Will she survive the pangs of the prolonged separation to be caressed by him again on his return? Perhaps, her lover will never return to her at all![92]

The love professed by the lady-love towards her lord, is so intense and refined:

Similes:

A simile is employed in literature for driving home a statement or a point of view more explicitly by likening of one thing to another. Dr. M. Varadarajanar says that: "The similes have the faculty of expressing the subtle sentiments and the artistry of the poets".[93] The literary value and the exquisiteness

85. -do- 8 : 12-14; 15-17; 18-20.
86. -do- 15 : 7-8.
87. -do- 23 : 3-5.
88. -do- 22 : 18-19.
89. -do- 25 : 25.
90. -do- 35 : 9-11.
91. -do- 35 : 12-13.
92. -do- 35 : 18-21.
93. Kalaik-Kalanciyam : Vol. V ; p. 480.

of the Sangham classics lie in the treasures of apt and impressive similes they contain. This particular figure of speech, employed in the Pālai-k-kali enhances our valuation of the literary mastery wielded by the poet, Peruṅkaṭuṅkō and our enjoyment of the word-painting presented by him.

The eyes of the lady-love have been most appropriately compared to blue lotus flowers.[94] The tears shed by them are likened to the hot drops of oil shed by a burning lamp.[95] The eyes of the lady-love look like beautiful lotus blossoms when she is happy in the company of her lord, but are filled with tears when he is away from her, proclaiming to the world, thereby, the endearing promises broken by him.[96] The lady-companion compares the eyes to the scandle-bearers who praise their friends in their presence but slander them behind their backs.[97] The distress of the lady-love, separated from her lover, is compared to the sufferiugs of the people under a tyrant.[98]

The beautiful, white row little teeth of the lady-love are likened to the spikes of the 'nāṇal' (Saccarum arumdinaceum) grass,[99] to the wild jasmine buds,[100] and to the fragrant 'mullai' buds.[101]

The complexion of this lady-love is compared to the tender glossy shoots of the 'acōkā' tree.[102] The beauty of the lady-love fades with the separation of her lover from her, as the moon wanes day by day.[103] Her complexion gets paler in the absence

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94. P. Kali; 13 : 2.
95. -do- 14 : 20–21.
96. -do- 24 : 13–14.
97. -do- 24 : 15–16.
98. -do- 33 : 14–15.
99. -do- 3 : 13.
100. -do- 13 : 3.
101. -do- 21 : 9–10.
102. -do- 14 : 12.
16 : 7–8

of her lord, as the sprouts of a tree blanches under shade.[104] The beauty of the lady-love wastes away, as the world dries up in the absence of rains.[105]

Sallowness sets in on the lady-love suffering pangs of separation from her lord; just as wisps of cloud hide the glory of the round moon[106] or as Rahu, the serpent-demon creeps over the lustruous face of the full moon.[107]

Separation from her lord brings on many changes over the lady-love. Her beauty fades. The bangles get loose and slip down her arms.[108] They are compared to sycophants who flourish on the prosperity of others and forsake them in their adversity.[109]

The bangles slip down the wasted arms of the lady-love as the wealth of a person, who does not succour his relations from falling on evil days, will dwindle.[110]

The lady-love, unable to hear the separation from her lord, heaves a deep sigh, even as the smoke from the secrificial fire of the 'Antaṇars' rise moaning into the skies.[111] The agony of the lady-love, who is separated from the hero, is likened to the panic of the defeated enemy.[112] The lady-companion asks the hero, who is bent upon his march in pursuit of wealth, whether his dear one should appear desolate as a place of fairs and festivities appears, deserted the very next day.[113] The faded face of the lady-love is compared to a country drained of its wealth,

104. -do- 19 : 17.
105. -do- 24 : 28–29.
106. -do- 6 : 7–8.
107. -do- 14 : 16–17.
108. -do- 6 : 15–16.
109. -do- 24 : 17–20.
110. -do- 23 : 18–19.
111. -do- 35 : 25–26.
112. -do- 29 : 21.
113. -do- 4 : 10–11.

by its tyrannous monarch.[114] The lady-companion remarks with a sneer, that the lotus blossom may not fade over-night though cast away from water, but that the lady separated from her lord, cannot survive even a single night.[115]

The 'Pālai' tract is sweltering. The sun is as white hot as the rage of Siva that consumed the fortresses of the three demons.[116] The hot sun is comparable to the rule of a tyrannous king.[117] The desert presents an appearance of desolation and havoc even as the life of a person, who has contravened the codes of ethics, and that of his relations, as well, appear dreary and forlorn.[118]

The plight of the subjects of a despot crushed down by unbearable and inequitous burden of taxes, is compared to the burning sun of the 'deserts.'[119] There is yet, another description of 'Pālai' grimmer and more striking. The tract is burning. The undergrowth has caught fire and crackles. Herds of elephants escape to a safer region. This is compared to the subjects of despot, smarting under his tyranny, attempting to escape to these neighbouring countries.[120] The poet wants to be still more impressive in his description of the burning 'Pālai.' He would compare it to Bhima escaping from the burning palace built of lac and camphor along with his brothers and mother to safer regions.[121]

It is said of the elephants that, some times, they refuse to respond to goading, but are arrested by the sweet music of the lyre. Similarly, the hero though a man of resolution responds

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114. -do- 4 : 12–13.
115. -do- 4 : 14–15.
116. -do- 1 : 4–5.
117. -do- 7 : 1–2.
118. -do- 9 : 3–4.
119. -do- 8 : 5–7.
120. -do- 12 : 1–2.
121. -do- 24 : 1–11.

to the loving call of the humble lady-companion, though humble, and abandons his proposal to leave his beloved and go in search of wealth.[122] The relatives, would speak the truth and correct a person of his faults; so also the difficulties, that beset his way through the forests restrain the hero from proceeding on his proposed journey.[123] The sweet persuasions of the lady-companion, that made the hero abandon his intended journey are compared to the specifics administered by a physician and have cured a disease.[124]

The return of the hero within the set time restores the confidence of the lady-love in his promises. This is like one's hand hastening to the relief of his smarting eyes.[125] Youth is evanescent. This great truth is brought out most effectively, by comparing the passing of the youth to the flow of water in the river, and to the gradual decrease in the level of water in it.[126]

The efflorescence of a lotus bud is itself the death of the bud.[127] Similarly time is fleeting and stops nowhere.

The ephemerality of the world by possessions is compared to the snapped strings of a lyre, the intransigence of Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth, and the king whose cruetly causes death to many.[128]

There are references to certain animals in Pālai-k-kali. The spots on the skin of the deer like roasted rice.[129] The legs of the elephants resemble wooden pounders,[130] and its tusks are white as milk.[131]

122. do 1 : 26-27.
123. do 2 : 21-22.
124. do 16 : 18-20.
125. do 33 : 23-24.
126. do 19 : 13.
127. do 16 : 15-16.
128. do 7 : 10-11 ; 13-14; 16-17.
129. do 12 : 3.
130. do 12 : 6 ; 20 : 1.
131. do 20 : 1.

The look of the highwaymen, is compared to the frightful gaze of the tiger.[132] The twang of the bow-string is as loud as the roar of a lion.[133] The beards on the faces of these murderous robbers, are trimmed like the curling horns of a stag.[134]

The enemy finds an easy access into a country, which lacks a strong, forceful army; so also the spring season commences its attack on the lady-love, whose lover is not with her.[135]

The dark tresses of the lady-love is compared to the imbrications and the tracery of the river sand strewn with fragrant blossoms.[136] The flowing long tresses of women are likened to the ripples on the streams.[137]

Elephants prop themselves with their long tusks stuck to the ground and with their trunks raised above. This reminds the poet of the long ploughshares turning the sods.[138] The bees hum around the twigs with half-opened buds and eat the pollen dust. The poets compare these bees to the ascetics who enjoy the fruits of the severe penance performed by them.[139]

The physical beauty of the lady-love has been delineated by poet in graphic terms employing apt similes. The locks of the lady-love are lustrous like gems. The sallowness that has set in on her complexion shines like beaten gold.[140]

The lover promises to his lady-love, that he would return to her arms within the time, fixed by him. This promise lights

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132. -do- 3 : 1-3.
133. -do- 14 : 1.
134. -do- 14 : 5-6.
135. -do- 26 : 7-8.
136. -do- 26 : 5-6.
137. -do- 28 : 6.
138, -do- 7 : 4-5.
139. -do- 29 : 1-3.
140. -do- 21 : 13-19

up her heart, which is kept on by her faith in his promises. This characteristic is explained by a comparison to the spark of life, infused by an artist in his painting, which lasts till the life-time of the picture.[141]

That the hero would never break his plighted word, is compared to the Pandiyan king who never broke his promises.[142]

The freshly blossomed lotus flower shines like the lit-up faces of the amorous young couple locked up in embrace.[143] The trees in full bloom, are likened to the rapid increase in the wealth of an active person.[144] The humming of the bees swarming around the flowers to devour the pollen dust, is compared to the sweet music of the danseuses.[145]

The leadership of the hero is splendorous as the effulgent sun.[146] From the foregoing account of the similes, explicit as well as implied and other poetic embellishments, Kalittokai's contribution to Tamil literature can very well be evaluated and appreciated.

141. -do- 21 : 5-6.
142. -do- 34 : 24-25.
143. -do- 30 : 5.
144. -do- 34 : 1.
145. -do- 35 : 4.
146. -do- 18 : 11.

5. AKANĀṈŪṞU

Akanāṉūṟu is an important work of the Eṭṭu-t-tokai group. The length of the poems of Akanāṉūṟu varies from thirteen lines to thirty-one lines. Akanāṉūṟu is a collection of four hundred verses as the name indicates. As it contains long verses as opposed to the shorter verses of Kuṟuntokai, it is sometimes called 'Neṭuntokai', 'a collection of long verses'.

The poet who compiled Akanāṉūṟu was Urutiracarmaṉ, son of Uppūrikkuṭi-k-Kiḻār; and the person responsible for the collection was the august monarch Pandiyan Ukkira-p-peru Vaḻuti. One of the four hundred verses, contained in this anthology, is ascribed to this scholar king.[1]

Akanāṉūṟu contains a detailed treatment of the Mutaṟ-poruḷ, i.e. place and time, Karu-p-poruḷ, things most useful for the day to day life of the people like food, occupation, birds, music, etc. and Uri-p-poruḷ, the varied aspects of love.

The anthology of Akanāṉūṟu includes poems, composed by one hundred and forty-five poets. Of those, the names of three could not be ascertained.[2]

Akanāṉūṟu provides a fund of information on the deep and intense devotion and attachment existing between the lover and his loved one, the self abnegation practised by the one towards the other, the duty-consciousness of the hero, his steadfast endeavours to earn wealth, the sagacity, sincerity and self-effacement of the lady-companion, a faithful and intimate description of the five 'tiṇais' (regions), customs and manners of the ancient Tamils, their culture and civilisation, etc.

Akanāṉūṟu, is said to be an earlier work, in Eṭṭu-t-tokai collection.[3]

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1. Aka; 26.
2. -do- 114, 117 and 165.
3. Thiru R. Venkatachalam Pillai; Akanāṉūṟṟu-c-Corpoḷivukaḷ: pp. 11-12.

Sixty-four, out of the four hundred poems, relate to the Cēras.[4] Of these, forty-one verses deal with 'Pālai-t-tiṇai',[5] eleven with 'kuriñci',[6] six with 'marutam'[7] and four with 'neytal'.[8] None of the poems relate to 'mullai'.

We find that this anthology contains a rich source of information on the customs and habits of the people, and certain historical events connected with the kings of the Cēra country. Similes with implied meaning and 'Iṛaicci', the variation of a simile denoting implied indications with reference to 'Karu-p-porul', the animals, birds, etc. are frequently used by the poets.

The Cera kings:

Atimanti was a Cōla princess. She was married to the Cērā king called, Āṭṭanatti. Paraṇar alludes to an episode relating to this royal couple in his poem. Āṭṭanatti was carried away by the floods of Cauvery while dancing in the presence of Karikāla Cola at 'Kaḻār'. Ātimanti wailed over his fate, and searched for him far and wide. The poet says rhapsodically and ingeniously that Atti was so handsome and stately that Cauvery fascinated by his attractive appearance, had abducted him. A fearless woman called 'Maruti' in a spirit of self-sacrifice plunged into the sea, saved Atti and restored him to his wife; but she was herself drowned.[9] Another verse by Paraṇar contains an allusion to the installation of the Kolli-p-pāvai on the Kolli hills by the celestials. The pavai was a circean statue, bewitching and enticing.[10]

4. Aka: 5, 10, 15, 36, 45, 60, 62, 65, 69, 76, 77, 91, 93, 97, 99, 105, 111, 127, 135, 142, 143, 149, 152, 153, 155, 168, 173, 185, 197, 198, 199, 209, 212, 213, 222, 223, 235, 236, 258, 261, 267, 270, 290, 291, 393, 309, 311, 325, 337, 338, 347, 349, 352, 356, 359, 376, 379, 381, 389, 392 and 396.

5. Aka: 5, 15, 45, 65, 69, 77, 91, 93, 97, 99, 105, 111, 127, 135, 143, 149, 153, 155, 173, 185, 197, 199, 209, 213, 223, 225, 261, 263, 267, 291, 303, 309, 313, 325, 337, 347, 349, 359, 379, 381 and 389.

6. -do- 62, 142, 152, 168, 198, 212, 222, 358, 338, 352 and 392.

7. -do- 36, 76, 236, 356, 376 and 396.

8. -do- 10, 60, 270 and 290.

9. -do- 222 : 5-12.

10. -do- 62 : 12-16.

Vāṉavarampaṉ was a monarch, victorious in naval campaigns, and he was very clever in investing and capturing fortresses.[11] He ruled from Veḷiyam.[12] Beyond the frontiers of his country, lay a dense sweltering forest.[13] Poṟaiyaṉ, ruling from Tondi, possessed strong chariots,[14] and had a strong elephant-force;[15] he was also, the lord of the Kolli hills;[16] he wore heavy fine gold jewellery,[17] had enough military prowess to destroy the enemy might, and was invincible to his enemies.[18] Māntaram Poṟaiyaṉ Kaṭuṅkō was generous to the poets, and had a large unlimited army at his command; and, the almsmen had their bowl always full during his reign.[19] Kuṭṭuvaṉ was the chief of Kuṭa Nādu, which comprised mostly of 'marutam' tracts (cultivable lands). His subjects had never known hunger.[20] As there was none courageous and strong enough to fight with him on land, he took out naval expeditions and won glorious victories on the sea. His military campus had sentinels, speaking many tongues.[21]

Kuṭṭuvaṉ, the chief of Kaḷumalam, had many horses with trimmed manes and strong chariots in his army.[22] He was the lord of Tondi the port-town[23] and Mantai.[24] He had a large elephant contingent at his command. It was this valiant monarch, who took out the bold expedition northwards, scored victories over the Aryan kings who obstructed his march, imprinted on the

11. -do- 45 : 15–19.
12. -do- 46 : 15–19.
13. -do- 389 : 15–18.
14. -do- 60 : 7.
15. -do- 62 : 12–13.
16. -do- 338 : 12–14.
17. -do- 303 : 3–6.
18. -do- 338 : 12–14.
19. -do- 142 : 1–6.
20. -do- 91 : 12–17.
21. -do- 212 : 12–21.
22. -do- 270 : 7–11.
23. -do- 290 : 12–14.
24. -do- 376 : 17–18.

rocks of the Himalayas, the royal emblem of a drawn bow, and captured and brought with him, the fierce kings of the northern countries.[25] This Kuṭṭuvaṉ is the Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ of Cilappatikāram fame.

Utiyaṉ was famous for his bounty. Bestowing gifts and alms was a mission in his life. His kitchen was never idle.[26] He is the legendary Peruñcoṟṟu utiyaṉ credited to have been feeding during the festivals, celebrating the war of Mahabharata.

Cēralātaṉ was the proud possessor of a strong naval contingent. He put down the piracy of the Kadambars with a strong hand and cut down their totem tree.[27] He too is reported to have raided the plains of the Ganges and imprinted the bow symbol on the Himalayas. He was the lord of Māntai. His treasury was always overflowing with the tributes paid by his vassals. Māmūlaṉār, who has sung him says that the superfluous part of the tributes scattered on the ground.[28] We presume that this Cēralātaṉ is the same as Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñcēralātaṉ.

One 'Koṭai', the king of Vañci (Karuvūr) had a large army which included elephantry and cavalry. The river Āṉporuṉai flows by Vañci.[29] He protected Vañci vigilantly.[30] Kaḷaṅkāy-k-Kaṇṇi Nārmuṭi-c-cēral fought with Naṉṉaṉ at 'Peruntuṟai' and recovered from him his lost territories.[31]

Vāṉavaṉ had a large cavalry poised for action.[32] He could destroy the fortresses of his enemies, with little effort.[33]

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25. do 396 : 16-19.
26. do 168 : 6-8.
27. do 127 : 3-4 and 347 : 3-5.
28. do 127 : 3-10.
29. do 93 : 19-21.
30. do 263 : 11-13.
31. do 199 : 18-23.
32. do 309 : 9-11.
33. do 381 : 13-17.

The Cōḷās :

Paraṇar has referred to the dance recital of Āttanatti before Karikāla, the Cḷoā King at Kaḷār, the port-town.[34] The Cōḷās possessed a well filled treasury at Kuṭantai.[35] There was a court of justice functioning at 'Uṟantai'[36] The river Cauvery belonged to the Cōḷās.[37] In 'Pākkam', a small port-town, those was a warehouse for storing goods of import and export. The Cōḷā king had strong detachments of the army for lifting of the enemy's, cattle.[38]

The Pandiyās :

Pandiyan Neṭuñceḻiyaṉ met at the famous place called 'Talaiyālaṅkāṉam' the combined forces of the Cērā, and the Cōḷā kings and the chieftains, Titiyaṉ, Eḻiṉi, Erumaiyūraṉ, Iruṅkō Vēṇmāṉ and Porunaṉ, obtained a crushing victory over them in a single day engagement and captured their war-drums and royal umbrellas.[39] Pacumpūṇ Pāṇdiyaṉ was a righteous king victorious in battles and very wealthy. He had captured many of the enemy's fortresses.[40] In Madurai, the Capital of this monarch, the day-market was filled with the fragrance of sweet scents and perfumed put on show for sale.[41]

The minor chieftains :

Akanāṉūru contains copious information on chieftains bearing the name Naṉṉaṉ. There have been more than one chieftain of that name. Māmūlaṉār refers to a Naṉṉaṉ who was the chief of 'Pāḻi',[42] 'Pāḻi' was being terrorised by a demon, who had

34. -do- 376 : 4–5.
35. -do- 60 : 13–15.
36. -do- 93 : 1–5.
37. -do- 213 : 21–24.
38. -do- 338 : 17–20.
39. -do- 36 : 12–23.
40. -do- 338 : 1–5.
41. -do- 93 : 8–11.
42. -do- 15 : 10–12.

to be constantly propitiated with plenty of offerings.[43] It was this Nannan, who defeated 'Piṇṭan'. He ruled from 'Pāram'. The range of hills in his country was called 'Ēḻil'. According to Paraṇar, 'Pāḻi' was at the foot of those hills.[44] Gold was mined in his country.[45] Kallāṭanār informs us that Kaḷaṅkāy-k-kaṇṇi Nārmuṭi-c-cēral defeated a Nannan at 'Peruntuṛai'.[46] Nannan distributed freely to the poets and minstrels, the booty he had abstracted from the fortresses captured by him.[47] He raided Pugal Nādu. Āy Eyinan, who laid siege to Pāḻi, was defeated woefully.[48] Mocikīranār alludes to a Nannan, who took refuge temporarily in a forest unable to meet an attack by his enemies and later came out of his hiding, inflicted a crushing defeat on them and recovered his country.[49] Māmūlanār sings a Nannan Vēṇmān belonging to Viyalūr who showered gifts on the dancers and the minstrels.[50]

Āy captured fortresses and plundered their treasuries.[51] Tūy Eyinan attacked Nannan of Pāḻi, but was killed in action by one Minili.[52] He sent his warriors to seize the cattle of the enemy.[53] Kaṇṇan Eḻini was a wealthy chieftain and possessed a powerful army. Māmūlanār says, that Mutukunṛam belonged to him.[54]

In Akanāṉūṛu there is an allusion to Kapilar, a sympathetic and intreprid poet who adopted an ingenous device to feed the

43. do 142 : 8-15.
44. do 152 : 10-13.
45. do 173 : 15-17.
46. do 199 : 18-20.
47. do 349 : 5-9.
48. do 396 : 1-3.
49. do 392 : 21-28.
50. do 199 : 18-20.
51. do 69 : 13-20.
52. do 396 : 1-6.
53. do 105 : 9-13.
54. do 197 : 8-10.

starving inmates of the fortress of Parampu of Pāri, under a prolonged siege by the three Tamil kings, the Cērā the Cōḷā and the Pāndiyā. He trained parrots to peck and fetch ears of corn and drop them to those hungry people.[55] This episode is referred to in some other Saṅgham Classics too.

Māmūlanār states, that the chieftain Atiyan, endowed Aḷḷan with extensive lands for the success in battles he had obtained for him.[56] There was yet another chief in the north of the name Pāṇan who ruled over a fertile country,[57] and fought Titiyan at Kurukkai and cut down his totem tree.[58] Miñili slaughtered Atikan and his warriors to propitiate the demon of Pāḷi.[59]

He killed also Āy Eyinan at Pāḷi[60] Aktai gave away elephants and gold to the poets and minstrels. In the royal processions of Aktai, Poruṇar beat huge drums.[61] Pulli was the lord of the Vēṅkaṭa hills.[62] Malaiyamān TIrumuṭi-k-kāri was the chief of Muḷḷūr. He killed Ōri in a battle and gifted his country to the Cērās.[63] It is interesting to find, that these two chiefs were classified as 'Vaḷḷaḷs', persons of unbounded liberality.

Kaḷuvuḷ, the chief of Kāmūr, withstood the joint attack of the fourteen Vēḷirs.[64] Vēṅkaṭa hills were sometimes under Tondaiyūr too. Beyond these hills lay the country of the Vaṭukars.[65]

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55. -do- 303 : 8-13.
56. -do- 325 : 7-9.
57. -do- 325 : 16-18.
58. -do- 45 : 8-12.
59. -do- 142 : 9-4.
60. -do- 396 : 1-6.
61. -do- 76 : 3-4.
62. -do- 209 : 8.
63. -do- 135 : 10-14.
64. -do- 213 : 1-3.
65. -do- 213 : 8.

starving inmates of the fortress of Parampu of Pāri, under a prolonged siege by the three Tamil kings, the Cērā the Cōlā and the Pāndiyā. He trained parrots to peck and fetch ears of corn and drop them to those hungry people.[55] This episode is referred to in some other Saṅgham Classics too.

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55. -do- 303 : 8-13.
56. -do- 325 : 7-9.
57. -do- 325 : 16-18.
58. -do- 45 : 8-12.
59. -do- 142 : 9-4.
60. -do- 396 : 1-6.
61. -do- 76 : 3-4.
62. -do- 209 : 8.
63. -do- 135 : 10-14.
64. -do- 213 : 1-3.
65. -do- 213 : 8.

Piṭṭaṉ was the commander of the Cērā army. He was a gallant hero in wars.[66] He was also the chief of the 'Kutirai' mountain. He gave gifts of gold the people in want.[67] He was a scion of the Cōlā line, and the ruler of Vallam.[68]

Places mentioned:

The tributes extracted from their enemies were treasured by the Cōlās at Kuṭantai.[69] Uṟantai had a court of justice functioning in it.[70] Towns of Kaḷār and Vallam have already been mentioned. In Akanāṉūṟu we have references to the Cērā towns, Tondi,[71] Karuvūr,[72] Vañci,[73] Muciṟi,[74] and Māntai.[75] Places like Kalumalam Veḷiyam, Oṭuṅkāṭu, Peruntuṟai, Madurai, Pāḷi, Pāram and Viyalūr, have also been mentioned.

Customs and manners:

Children played dice.[76] Girls played games with balls,[77] and built toy-houses of sand on the river-beds.[78]

People ate boiled rice, fish cooked with tamarind, as well as dried fish.[79] Fishermen were employed in catching fish.[80] Articles of merchandise were mostly bartered. The vessels of Yavanars brought gold and sailed away with pepper.[81]

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66. -do- 77 : 14–19.
67. -do- 143 : 9–16.
68. -do- 356 : 11–15.
69. -do- 60 : 13–15.
70. -do- 93 : 1–5.
71. -do- 10 : 13 : 60 : 7 290 : 12–13.
72. -do- 93 : 20–21.
73. -do- 263 : 11–12 ; 396 : 16–19.
74. -do- 149 : 9–11.
75. -do- 127 : 6; 376 : 17–18.
76. -do- 5 : 8–10.
77. -do- 152 : 2–3.
78. -do- 60 : 9–11.
79. -do- 60 : 4–6 ; 290 : 2–3.
80. -do- 10 : 10–13 ; 60 : 1–3.
81. -do- 149 : 9–10.

Even while the King was holding his court, he would engage himself in acts of charity.[82] The victorious king would capture the enemy's war-drums and their royal umbrellas.[83] He would cut down totem trees.[84] A Cērā king won a naval war.[85] Pathways were cut through hills for the passage of the army.[86] Salt merchants travelled in groups.[87] Brahmins were employed to carry important messages.[88]

Description of Nature:

Description is the very essence of literature. Imagery is the chief requirement in poetic expressions. Mention has already been made to the fact, that the poems of Akanāṉūṟu, so far as they relate to the Cērās, deals with all the 'tiṉais' except 'mullai'.

The 'Pālai' region stretches right in the midst of marutam Māmūlaṉār regales us with a beautiful description of 'Pāḷai'. The hot summer sun scorches the mountain slopes. Yet, the sun is benevolent. It gives the day light and drives away the gloom of the night. The sources of water have dried up. There are no streams running down the hills. The male-elephants search for water with their long trunks in the dark holes and rocks. They find only the moss sticking on them. Bamboos burst at the joints on account of intense heat. The Mullai and Kūṟiñci regions have lost their usual characteristics and have, in part, turned into 'desert':[89]

Herds of fawn rest under the scanty shade of a tree. The shade is not that of green foliage but that of dried leaves about to drop. A spider has spun a web amid the branches of the

82. -do- 331 : 10–12.
83. -do- 36 : 21–22.
84. -do- 127 : 3–4.
85. -do- 212 : 14–21.
86. -do- 69 : 10–12.
87. -do- 337 : 5–6.
88. -do- 337 : 7.
89. -do- 91 : 1–7.

tree. The branches sway in the wind. The deer are very hungry and chew the bowstring hemp (maral). They are attacked by the copper-coloured wild dogs (Canis dukhmensis). The deer canter for their lives and are scattered like the 'Pūḷai' flowers caught in the wind; when sun sets; the dusk descends, the stag calls its herds back.[90]

'Kuṟiñci' is described very graphically. The poets have always linked the monkeys and jack-fruits together in Tamil literature. The sweet jack fruit is a delicious one much relished by monkeys.

A male monkey calls its mate to share a juicy jack-fruit with him. A peacock spreads its rainbow feathers and dances. The Poet's imagination takes wings. To him, the monkey appears like a drummer, the jack-fruit like the drum and the peacock like the dancer.[91]

The marutam is a region of fields cultivated. Tanks and ponds are full. The rivers flow. The lilies, the lotus, the 'varāl' (ophioccephalus marulins) and the 'vāḷai' (Trichiuruss haumela) fishes, the water-buffaloes, the cranes and storks excite the imagination of the poets in marutam.

Nakkirar, in one of his verses, praises the strength and the audacity of the 'varāl' fish. It dodges the fisherman's hook, and swallows the bait. It is too turbulent to be caught in a net. The fishermen drag the net, but the 'varāl' resists. The entire pond is stirred up by its violence. The poet compares it to an unruly bull straining at the tether. The male 'varāl' fish is a huge creature. It swollows the bait and is caught in the hook. In its furious fight to get itself free from the hook, it destroys the beautiful 'kuvaḷai' flowers and the leaves of water-lilies and tears the 'vaḷḷai' creepers.[92]

90. Aka : 199 : 5-12.
91. do 352 : 1-7.
92. do 36 : 1-8.

The neytal region is not fertile but it does not lack in water. Nakkirar paints a picture of the sea-shore scene. A male strok is caught in the net cast by the children of fishermen. It's mate perches on a palmyra tree nearby. It hugs its young ones within its wings. It sends-forth a plaintive call to the male stork in distress.[93]

From the instances quoted above, we find that, nature had exerted a marked influence over the day-to-day lives of the Tamil people and has furnished a suitable background to their hopes and ambitions, efforts and experiences. The inspiration they drew from the weather, climate, birds and animals and myriad of other things like plants, the mountains and the seas, has been chiefly instrumental in fashioning the course of their life and the changes in their culture, civilisation and history. 'In fact, the influence of nature, as obtained in the Tamil land on poetry was final and far-reaching and far more decisive than the influence it exerted on the poetry of any other people in the world'.[94]

Themes of love :

The employment of the delicate and delightful themes of love in literary creations has always been found fascinating and inspiring. The lady-love, and the foster mother who appear in the Akam works of ancient Tamil literature are the superb creations of the poets based on the depth of their experience of men and matters.

We have many poems waxing ecstatic over the wide dark expressive eyes, the shining fore-head, the dark flowing tresses and the attractive soft complexion of the young maiden in love. The words depicting them are sweet and short ones ; yet, they contain packed in them, very long love-themes.

The young maid in love, the pupils of whose eyes is lost in the cold streaming tears, is presented before us.[95] The eyes

93. Aka : 290 ; 1-9.

94. -do- Fr. Xavier Thaninayagam ; Nature in Ancient Tamil Poetry ; p. 40.

95. -do- 5 : 21.

of the lady-love are compared to the blue lilies, and are always shown wet, as they exhibit the sufferings of her heart.[96]

The eyes of the lady-love while in separation grow plae;[97] her bangles slip;[98] she has lost hopes of the return of her lord and has lost hope in her own life.

Perhaps, nowhere in Tamil literature do we find the deep complex emotions, that surge through the innermost recesses of the hearts of lovers translated so effectively and so impressively into words, as in Akanāṉūṟu.

His deep love for the idol of his heart impels the hero to do certain courageous acts, which normally he would not come to do. In the pitch darkness of the dead of nights, the hero picks up enough strength and boldness and risks a walk through the forests infested with wild animals and keeps the tryst with his sweet-heart.[99] The beauty of the lady-love is bewitching as that of the 'Kolli-p-pāvai' installed on the Kolli hills by a celestial sculptor.[100] Who can have the strength of heart to leave such an enchantress in distress and go about seeking wealth?[101] But, to find the access to the mistress of his heart is not so easy, as the guard around her home was stronger than the defences around Naṉṉaṉ's Pāḻi[102] and around the treasury of the Cōlās maintained at Kuṭantai.[103]

A hundred hopes and despairs cross the anguished heart of the lady love, "Will her lord ever return to her arms? Will he not return at all? Or has he forgotten her?" She laments over her fate, as did the beautiful Ātimanti over the loss of her lord

96 Aka; 77 : 19.
97 do 197 : 1.
98 do 197 : 9.
99 do 62 : 6.
100 do 62 : 13-16.
101 do 199 : 22-24.
102 do 15 : 10-11.
103 do 60 : 13-15.

Āṭṭanatti in the floods of the Cauvery.[104] Her lover is gone, gone far away. He is no more by her side, to caress, her dark soft tresses.[105] It did not matter, that she languished of love-sickness but her hero should return to her after successful in his pursuits.[106] The hero whispers into her ears, sweet words of love and promises never to leave her side even for a short while. But, then why should he leave her prizing wealth more than her charms.[107] The lady-love wants to solve the riddle.

The lady-companion could wield mighty powers through sweet persuasion. She is wise. Her words are a feast to the learned, and they enlighten the ignorant: In her dealings with the hero or the foster mother, she is tactful, discrete and resourceful. She could bend them to her will.

Pālai-pāṭiya-Peruṅkaṭuṅkō has invented a beautiful implied simile and put it in the mouth of a lady-companion. The hero has left her lover's side. His loved one despairs of his return and is disconsolate. Her charming face has lost its lustre, even as the moon is eclipsed of its grandeur by the serpent demon 'Rahu'. Her lord has to pass through the dangerous 'tracts of deserts', where the steel hearted robbers kill the travellers for mere pleasure. Their arrows open gaping wounds on the bodies of the unfortunate victims of their savagery. Blood streams from the wounds. Crows drink the blood and return to their nests with suppressed cries like the men of secret service on alien soil; the observant here would draw a lesson from the crows. Undaunted by the severities of the hot deserts the crows have earned their day's feeding and returned to their nests in the evening to join their loved ones. The hero would simlarly return to his lady-love after undergoing the hardships of the Pālai! This little story of her lady-companion solaced the lady-love. Hopes return to her heart.[108]

104. Aka: 45: 13–14.

105. -do- 155: 4.

106. -do- 155: 5–6.

107. -do- 267: 1–3.

108. -do- 313: 1–10.

Acquisition of wealth is after all not sweeter, pleasanter and more winsome to a lover than the heart-to-heart nestling of his desert. He gives up his intended quest for wealth.[109]

Akanāṉūṟu abounds in implied similes. An implied simile, as has been stated elsewhere, is an indirect suggestion, by which an author, who does not purport to explicitly state his idea, endeavours, however, to present it through the skilful employment of such telling comparisons as would help people, to infer there, from what he actually intended to convey.[110]

In the simile of the "varāl" fish resisting the drag of the fishermen and stirring the pond at the dawn of the day, an implied meaning is to be read. The huge fish swallows the bait; the hero is charmed by the sweet enticing music of the 'Pāṇars'. The fish is not however caught in the hook; the hero has not abandoned himself entirely to the harlots; but extricates himself from their embraces in time. The fish strikes its fines and tears the aquatic creeper and Kuvaḷai flowers; the lover is caught on his return, in the accusative embroils of the relatives of the lady-love, but is able to escape their mauls.[111]

The fisherman sets out for his fishing expedition. His young daughter will supply him with a fare consisting of well cooked white rice bought on barter for salt and vegetables prepared with tamarind and tasty fish. In this simile, the persistent efforts of the hero to marry the lady of his choice is compared to a fisherman engaging himself in fishing; and the endeavours of the lady-love and her companion to win the hero's love to the young daughter of the fisherman successfully bartering salt for rice.[112]

The implied simile called 'uḷḷuṟai uvamam', is born of keen observation of nature and an intelligent, artistic and philosophical

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109. Aka: 379 : 15.

110. Tol; Poruḷ: Akattiṇai-iyal; 48. Tamil Lexicon Vol. I. P. 474.

111. Aka; 36 : 1-8.

112. -do- 60 : 1-6.

.nterpretation of the similitudes and the dissimilitudes noticed between the amorous lives of the human and animals.[113]

The lady-companion assures the lady-love that the hero would never forsake her, the hero will see animals exhibiting affection and regard towards their mates and young ones which will remind him of his beloved waiting for him anxiously. The male elephant enjoying the endearing company of its mate indolently allows its young one to romp over it.[114] Can the hero look at this impressive scene and not feel the pangs of separation himself?

The faithfulness of the hero towards her, has not been doubted by the lady-love. She knew very well, that he would not succumb to the attraction of wealth, probably as immense as that acquired by king Cēralātan̲ by exterminating the piracy of the Kaḍambars and defeating the Aryan kings of the north, consisting of jewellery, diamonds and pure gold. She was certain that he would rush back to her arm and tarry not a moment longer than it is necessary.[115]

But, what impreses us most, is the resolution of the hero not to part with her beloved ignoring the possibilities of his acquiring large fortunes. Paṭṭin̲a-p-pālai also contains similar idea referred to in Akanān̲ūṟu.[116]

The Saṅgham poets have not only painted landscapes as the back drops for the play of human love, but would also have their heroes and heroines project their own emotions over Nature and find these sympathetic responses and unsympathetic repulses to them. Thus Akanān̲ūṟu offers a scholar, a fertile field for a study into the psychology, culture, social aspirations etc. of the people of the Cērā country.

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113. Dr. V. Sp. Manickam; The Tamil Concept of Love; pp. 231-232.

114. -do- 197 : 13-15.

115. -do- 127 : 3-12.

116. Paṭṭinap; 218-220.

6. PURANĀNŪRU

Two of the Eṭṭuttokai anthologies, Patiṟṟuppattu and Puṟanāṉūṟu deal with the external reaction of conjugal love and the themes based on human conduct as regards war, heroism displayed in battles and affairs of state. Puṟanāṉūṟu is a collection of four hundred poems composed by varions poets during different periods of time. Most of these verses are of the nature of panegyrics on kings and chieftains. The collection is arranged in this order: poems composed on kings, poems relating to petty chieftains, poems bearing on certain themes of puṟam, and lastly verses relating to kings again. Many compositions by women poets are included in the Puṟam anthology.

Puṟanāṉūṟu enables us to have a deep insight into the life of the ancient Tamils as expressed in their language, culture, religion, civic administration and the part they played in the wars of their kings. In fact, it provides us with valuable material for a reconstruction of the early history of the Tamils. Prof. R. P. Sethu Pillai rates the utility of the anthology as of a high order; scholars and historians find it a vertable treasure-house of source material for their researches.[1]

We meet with very few cases of literary affection and strained figures of speech, like hyperbole and conventional metaphors in the verses of Puṟanāṉūṟu. The simplicity and realiability of the verses contained in Puṟanāṉūṟu have attracted many a savant like G. U. Pope for a deeper study of the language and literature of Tamilnadu.

Of the four hundred poems comprising the anthology, seventy-four relate to the Cēra country. They constitute a fertile field for inquiry into the social condition of the people of that country.

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1. Tamiḻ Inpam: p. 22.

Social condition of the Cērā country:

The people were devoted to their kings.[2] They trod a path of virtue.[3] They were noted for their cordiality and neighbourly love.[4] The Antaṉars dutifully performed homams and yagas.[5]

The people of the Cērā country were much attached to their wives and children. They delighted in listening to the sweet prattles of their affectionate children.[6]

An extraordinary virtue the Cēra people practised in their domestic life, was the hospitality shown by them to their guests. Auvaiyār pays a glowing tribute to the generosity, affection and fellow feeling of the Cērā king, Neṭumāṉ Añci. While there was plenty, he would distribute it among the needy and the supplicants, and while he had only a little of his own, he would yet share it with others.[7] The people of the Āy country were so very cordial to their guests that they offered them tasty food which included well cooked meat of porcupines, and presented them with the fragrant sandal wood and elephant tusks on a salver of spotted tiger skin.[8]

The Cērā country was 'Kuṟiñci' tract. Hence the people who lived there, were called 'Kuṟavars'. They drank the strong toddy preserved and well seasoned in bamboo tubes; donned 'tumpai' garlands interlaced with golden leaves, adorned their heads with the tender shoots of the palmyra trees[9] and danced the 'Kuraivai-k-Kūttu' on the wide clearances amid 'vēṅkai' (Ptero corpus marsupium) trees.[10] One of the thrilling pursuits

2. Puṟa; 20 : 21
3. -do- 2 : 8.
4. -do- 5 : 5-6.
5. -do- 2 : 22-23.
6. -do- 92 : 1-3.
7. -do- 95 : 6-7.
8. -do- 374 : 11-15.
9. -do- 129 : 1-3.
10. -do- 22 : 20-22.

of the people of the Cērā country, was trapping wild elephants in very large numbers and domesticating them.[11]

The Poets :

It is an interesting but a tragic reality, that the poets of those days had been always in want. Nevertheless, chill penury never numbed their wits, but on the other hand, sharpened them. Some of the finest pieces of poetry of Puranāṉūṟu are found to be the creations of penniless, starving poets. One of the poets pathetically sings with tear-filled eyes, that he and his kith and kin were reduced to destitution and consumed by hunger.[12] Another poet paints a still more distressing picture of his wife at home with her breasts withered for want of nourishment and which her baby in arms would not suckle.[13]

The poets struck by poverty and want resorted to the king and the petty chieftains for succour.[14] They did not relish the delayed offers of assistance from them, and would rather reject them out of self respect.[15] They poured forth their anguished hearts in poems, that shine as some of the best creations of literary art. Poetess Auvaiyār and poet Peruñcittiraṉār have produced such everlasting gems of poetry.

The king professed a great esteem and reverence to poets and loved them for their great scholarship, culture and wisdom: Literature has recorded the selfless act of a king who actually fanned a poet, who had, by mistake, slept on the bed intended for the royal drum.[16] Poets who had received generous gifts from the kings and chiefs have been magnanimous and noble enough to direct other poets, bards, minstrels and dancers to these patrons for gifts.[17] These poets and artists, in turn, approached the royal

11. Pura ; 17 : 14–19.
12. -do- 136 : 6–9.
13. -do- 211 : 17–22.
14. -do- 206 : 6–13.
15. -do- 207 : 2–11.
16. -do- 50 : 7–13.
17. -do- 48 : 5–9.

benefactors and obtained gifts of flowers, made of gold and strung in silver.[18]

It is usual for the poets, to sing elegies on the death of kings and chieftains celebrated for the protection they had offered to the poets and minstrels. Several instances of such compositons could be quoted from Puṟanāṉūṟu. The elegy of Auvaiyār on Neṭumāṉ Añci[19] and that of the poet Kuṭṭuvaṉ Kīraṉār sung on the death of king Āy,[20] have been found to be classic examples of elegy in Tamil.

Mode of disposal of the dead:

Though the ancient Tamils disposed of their dead by burial in general, cremation also appears to have been practised by them. We have a reference to the latter mode of disposal of the dead, in one of the verses of Puṟanāṉūṟu composed by a Cērā king, Cēramāṉ Kōṭṭampalattuu-t-tuñciya-Mākkōtai on the death of his queen.[21]

Commerce:

The people of the Cērā country carried on an extensive internal and sea-borne trade. They bartered salt for rice and pepper for gold.[22]

Knowledge of Science:

Murañciyūr Muṭinākarāyar, a poet who is assigned a very early period, in his composition on Cēramāṉ Peruñ-Cōṟṟu-Utiyaṉ-Cēralātaṉ refers to the five elements, the dense earth composed of atoms, the ether or space which supports the earth, the air filling the space, fire mixed with wind and the water opposed to fire in nature.[23] From another verse by Kuṟuṅkōḻiyūr Kiḻār

18. Puṟa; 11 : 10–18.
19. -do- 231 : 1–6 and 235 : 16–17.
20. -do- 240 : 10–14.
21. -do- 245 : 3–5.
22. -do- 343 : 1–6.
23. -do- 2 : 1–6.

composed on another Cērā king Cēramāṉ Yaṉaikkaṭ-cēy-Māntarañ. Cēral Irumpoṟai, we learn, that people were aware of the fact that space was an element distinct from the other four and was mostly a vacuum.[24]

There is enough evidence provided by the Puṟanāṉūṟu verses to show, that the people of those days had observed the rare celestial phenomena such as comets and meteors, that the division of the heavens into twenty-seven star mansions was already an accomplished fact, and that they could distinguish between a planet and a star.[25]

The life of the people :

Some of the seventy-four Puṟanāṉūṟu verses relating to the Cērā country furnish us with valuable information on the day to day life of the women folk of the Cērā country. The women sported in water, shaped wet sand into images of goddesses on the sea-shore and decorated them with fresh blossms.[26]

The people of the Cērā country believed in the immutability of fate and in reincarnations.[27] They drank toddy filtered with fibres.[28] They worshipped installed stones for heroes.[29] Personal prowess had its own charm with the Cērās. A young man could win the hand of a maiden only after proving his valour in a fitting manner, and none of the precious gifts he might fetch for her from the mercantile ports like Muciṟi[30] would be of any value otherwise. Children wore trinkets containing the teeth of tigers.[31]

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24. Puṟa ; 20 : 3–4.
25. -do- 229 : 2 and 1 ; 12.
26. -do- 11 : 1–5.
27. -do- 134 : 1.
28. -do- 232 : 4.
29. -do- 232 : 3.
30. -do- 343 : 10–13.
31. -do- 374 : 9.

Heroic Deeds of the Cērās :

The military might of the Cērā monarchs was exercised not only for defensive purposes, but for offensive purposes also if need arose. Heroism in fighting was so much valued and admired that a still-born baby or a foetus born shapeless would be symbolically cut by a sword and then buried.[32] While fiercely engaged in a personal encounter in the thick of the battle, a Cērā warrior knew how to control his huge elephant mad with the lust of war, how to manoeuvre the romping horse and how to shoot the murderous arrows, riding on a chariot.[33]

An impressive verse composed by Auvaiyār on Atiyamāṉ, contains an intimate picture of the king appearing in his battle accoutrement; She has not omitted to describe even the unheald wound in his throat received in a previous engagement.[34]

The king was always at the head of the army. He was the first warrior to receive the proud war wound. Auvaiyār wails in one of her meaningful songs on Atiyamāṉ Neṭumāṉ Añci, that the enemy spear that killed him first pierced the head of the minstrels, the raised hands of the supplicants, the wakeful eyes of the body-guards and lastly the tongues of the poets and at the end landed on the broad cheat of the king.[35] The versatile poetess has sung many poems of Atiyamāṉ's unparalleled heroism in battles.

The enemy territories laid waste by the conquering Cērā king was symbolically ploughed with teams of asses and sown with white 'varaku' (Paspalum serobiculatam—white variety), and horsegram.[36] He extracted tributes from the enemies.[37]

The Cērā kings were reputed for their sense of self-respect, and for unsullied heroism. Cēramāṉ Peruñcēralātaṉ committed

32. Puṟa; 74 : 1–2.
33. -do- 14 : 1–9.
34. -do- 100 : 1–6.
35. -do- 235 : 10–15.
36. -do- 392 : 8–10.
37. -do- 22 : 25–27.

suicide out of shame, because an arrow of the enemy pierced him through his back and not through his chest.[38] Cēramāṉ Kaṇaikkāl Irumporai refused to accept the delayed offer of water in the prison, preferred thirsting to death instead.[39] Puṟanāṉūṟu contains a number of instances of similar deeds of heroism and sacrifice.

Generosity of the Cērās :

Āy Aṇtiraṉ was noted for his generosity. He was profuse in bestowing valuable gifts on the poets who sang his glory.[40] The number of elephants, he gifted away to others, far exceeded the number of stars twinkling in the sky, according to a zealous and exaggerated estimate of a poet.[41] He never gave rewards to others in the hope, that it would fetch him good in the next birth.[42]

Atiyamāṉ Neṭumāṉ Añci gave away to Auvaiyār a precious, divine Nelli (Myrobalam) fruit that would have secured him immortality.[43]

Nāñcil Vaḷḷuvaṉ,[44] Kaṭal-Piṟakkōṭṭiya—Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ,[45] Celvak-kaṭuṅkō Vāḷiyātaṉ,[46] Atiyamāṉ Pokuṭṭeḻiṉi,[47] Vāṭṭāṟṟu Eḻiṉi,[48] Cēramaṉ Vañcaṉ[49] and a host of other chiefs have earned undying name and fame in the hands of grateful poets and poetesses for their liberality and rewards they bestowed on them. The Puṟa-nāṉūṟu anthology is replete with instances of the kings and

38. Puṟa ; 65 : 9–11.
39. -do- 74 : 4–7.
40. -do- 127 : 3–10.
41. -do- 129 : 5–9.
42. -do- 134 : 1–4.
43. -do- 91 : 9–11.
44. -do- 140 : 3–8.
45. -do- 343 : 7–9.
46. -do- 387 : 20–27.
47. -do- 392 : 11–19.
48. -do- 396 : 13–24.
49. -do- 398 : 16–29.

chieftains sharing the tasty food they ate, and the costly golden ornaments they wore, along with the poets and the supplicants who swarmed about them.

Description of Nature in Puṟanāṉūṟu:

The rise of the beautiful morning sun, its splendrous course across the expansive heavens and its setting in the ruddy west have always excited the imagination of the poets of all places and of all times. The poets of Puṟanāṉūṟu were not exceptions to this temptation. The result is, a kaleidoscopic presentation of the sun and his splendour in some of the verses of Puṟanāṉūṟu.[50]

The does resting peacefully on the verdant grassy field under the cool shady trees hugging their young ones to their bosoms have caught the eyes of some of the poets of the anthology.[51] The elephant has always been the pride of the Cērā country. It is no wonder, that the poets have lavished their imagination and expression in painting glowing pictures of their portly form and gallantry.[52]

Characterisation of the four classes of lands ('tiṇais')

Not only the Kuṟiñci but also the other classes of land have received a full-length treatment in the hands of the poets of Puṟanāṉūṟu. The leaping tigers and the terrified bucks of the 'Kuṟiñci',[53] the huge tuskers, the dense jungles of the 'mullai',[54] the fertile fields with the heavy ears of the paddy crop bending low and touching the earthern bunds,[55] and the aquatic birds beating their slender wings and riding the heaving waves of the sea along the 'neytal' coast,[56] are picturesquely brought before our eyes by those poets.

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50. Puṟa; 2 : 9–10; 8 : 7–10.
51. -do- 2 : 21–23 and 132 : 4–6.
52. -do- 387 : 6–11 and 22 : 1–8.
53. -do- 90 : 1–3.
54. -do- 131 : 4.
55. -do- 98 : 19–20.
56. -do- 396 : 1–6.

Nāñcil Nādu has earned hearty tributes from the poets Orucirai-p-periyaṉār and Karuvūr-k-katappiḷḷai: The immense fertility of its soil, the undulating landscape graced with the sloping hills drained by slender cascades of water,[67] the paddy crops as luxuriant as juicy sugarcanes, the wild jasmine (jasminium angustifolium) and 'Kūtāḷi' (Ipomes) blossoms shedding their sweet fragrance around, and the ocean bearing the lustrous pearls have been glorified by them[68] and enshrined in beautiful little verses included in the anthology.

Karuvūr was mentioned in one of the poems of Akanāṉūṟu.[69] Tondi was a seaport town on the west coast of the Cēra country.[60] These places have received their share of the warm acclamation from a poetess, who, for reasons not known, called herself 'Pēy makaḷār' and Kuruṅ-Kōḷiyūr Kiḻār respectively.

The administration of the Cērās:

The Cērā kings had dedicated themselves to a just and impartial administration, which was also noted for efficiency and at the same time for its humaneness and grace.[61] The Cērā treasury was never empty, as tributes paid by the vanquished kings and petty chiftains were flowing into it:[62] There was a curious, if not inhuman according to modern standards, royal directive that any one found asleep on the trestle of the war-drum would be punished with death.[63]

The Cērā monarchs were very solicitous towards the poets, minstrels, and dancers, professed great respect and love for them and rewarded them for their deep learning and refinement.[64] A

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57. Pura ; 137 : 5–12.
58. -do- 380 : 6–19.
59. -do- 11 : 1–6.
60. -do- 17 : 9–13 and 48 : 3–4.
61. -do- 2 : 17–20 ; 8 : 4–5 ; 5 : 5–7 and 17 : 5–8.
62. -do- 22 : 24–28; 387 : 11–13.
63. -do- 50 : 5–9.
64. -do- 230/: 1–4 ; 103 : 11–12 ; 101 : 1–3 ; 367 : 4–9.

portion of the tributes extracted from the enemies was distributed to them:

Historical information furnished by Puranāṉūṟu:

The anthology furnishes interesting information, historical as well as legendary, on the Cērā royalty. There is a laudatory reference in it by Murañciyūr Muṭinākaṉār to a Cērā king called Cēramāṉ Peruñcōṟṟu Utiyaṉ cēralātaṉ, who is credited to have supplied food to the vast armies, which fought in the Bharata War.[65] From Auvaiyār, we have an engaging piece of news that one of the ancient Cērā kings brought the sugarcane crop from the world of the Devas and introduced it in Tamil Nādu.[66]

Atiyamāṉ Neṭumāṉ Añci fought successfully single handed against the seven chiefs simultaneously and also defeated the king of Kovalūr.[67] To commemmorate this act of extraordinary valour, poet Paraṇar composed a penegyric on him.

Āy Aṇtiraṉ was famous for his lavish gift of elephants to the poets and minstrels.[68]

Poet Kuruṅkōḻiyūr Kiḻār mentions with pardonable pride that the Cērā country was bounded on the north by the Himalayas, on the east and west by the sea and the south by Kanyakumari.[69]

Cēramāṉ Kaṇaikkāl Irumpoṟai got defeated in an engagement with Cōlaṉ Ceṅkaṇāṉ and was imprisoned. One day, he was very thirsty and beckoned to the prison warder for some water. Water was brought to him but after an inordinate delay. The Cēramāṉ took it as an affront to his self-respect. He refused the offer of water and died after composing a verse that has found its way into the Puranāṉūṟu anthology, and enlightens us on a heroic custom of the royal families to symbolically cut

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65. Pura; 2: 13–16.
66. -do- 99: 1–4.
67. -do- 99: 8–11.
68. -do- 130: 5–7.
69. -do- 17: 1–4.

by a sword, a still born baby or a misformed foetus before giving it a burial.[70]

Muciṟi was a harbour town through which there was a considerable flow of internal and external trade which stimulated the growth of wealth and promoted the welfare of the Cēra country.[71]

Literary Merits of Puṟanāṉūṟu :

The anthology of Puṟanāṉūṟu is a treasure house of literary beauties, brilliant characterisations and colourful presentation of nature in all her aspects. Employment of similes, apt and telling, is a special feature with the Puṟanāṉūṟu poets. It demonstrates their capacity for keen observation and skill in translating them into sweet little words, fitted into rhythmic and resonant verses. The poets have presented us, the entire Tamil society as a superb stage, on which a lively and moving drama was being played by actors, who were none other than the kings, the army, the courtiers, the poets, minstrels, and dancers, and the entire community of active, hardworking and pleasure loving people. The 'viṟalis', the accomplished danseuses sang and danced and earned rich rewards by winning the admiration of the kings and chieftains.[72]

No limit appears to have been set by the Cēra monarchs in bestowing gifts on supplicants. One of them had gifted away all his possessions so that the royal stable had not a single elephant, left, and the women of the royal household had nothing but the sacred 'tāli' left on them.[73]

Figures of speeches :

Of the seventy-four verses dealing with the Cēra, all but one consist of similes. The similes have been employed for various

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70. Puṟa : 74 : 1-7.
71. -do- 343 : 10-11
72. -do- 89 : 1-2 and 103 : 1-4.
73. -do- 127 : 5

purposes. Some were meant to explain and expatiate on certain statements contained in the verses and some to enhance the artistry of the compositions. There are cases of sustained similes as the one employed by Murañciyūr Muṭinākarāyar in his panegyrid on Cēramān Peruñcōṟṟu Utiyan by which he compares the characteristics of the king and his administration to the functions of the five elements in nature.[74]

Puṟanāṉūṟu is a veritable treasure house for students of early Tamil history, as it contains a mine of information about ancient Tamil life, their customs and manners and all couched in glorious and everlasting poetry.

74. Puṟa: 3 : 1–8.

PATTUPPĀṬṬU

We find only one or two references to Cērā in Pattuppāṭṭu. Poet Muṭattāma-k-Kaṇṇiyār refers to the Cērā, the Cōḷa and the Pandiya monarchs merely as the 'three kings' of Tamil country in the Porunarāṟṟuppaṭai.[1] Naccinarkkiṉiyar, the commentator of Pattuppāṭṭu, interprets the term 'three' do denote the Cērā, Cōḷā and the Pandiyā kings.

Kaṭiyalūr Uruttiraṅkaṇṇaṉār refers to the three kings in his Perumpāṇaṟṟuppaṭai.[2]

The Cērā king as well as his capital 'Vañci' are mentioned in Ciṟupāṇāṟṟuppaṭai. The author of this idyll describes the Cērā country thus: "The Cērā country is famous for the buffaloes that walk through the pond, crush the fish, eat the 'ceṅkaḻunīr' flowers with their huge mouths and rest under the shade of the jack tree, around which the pepper creepers twine, while the tender leaves of the turmaric plants, stroke their backs and they also rest on a bed of wild jasmine and chew their cud".[3]

The same poem contains and allusion to one Kuṭṭuvaṉ, the king of Kuṭṭanādu, who possessed the arms, mighty enough to cut down the 'Kaṇaiyā' tree, who engraved the bow-symbol on the rocks of the Himalayas guarded over by the chieftains of the northern countries and who possessed fast-moving chariots.[4] Again in the same poem, Vañci is described as a city of tall towers and constant freshes.[5]

1. Porun: 53–54.
2. Perumpāṇ: 32–33.
3. Ciṟupāṇ: 41–47
4. -do- 47–49.
5. -do- 50.

Madurai-k-Kāñci contains information about Pandiyan Netuñceliyan defeating Cērā and Cōla kings, whose names are not known.[6] Naccinarkkiniyar, the commentator of Pattuppāṭṭu, says, that Pandiyan Netuñceliyan fought against the Cērā, the Cōla and five other chieftains.[7] Māñkuṭi Marutanār, the author of Madurai-k-Kāñci, describes the court held by the Cērā monarch. The king sits in his court. He is also the ruler of the Cērā country washed by the sea. He is surrounded and blessed by the company of 'Kūttars' (dancers) thrumbing on their drums. He is donning a garland of palmyra flowers. A gathering on erudite scholars discuss logic and philosophy of various faiths before him.[8] Naccinārkkiniyar explains that the kings and the chieftains were the Cēran, the Cempiyan, Titiyan. Elini, Erumaiyūran, Irunkō Vēṇman and Porunan.[9]

The above information, though scanty, throws somelight on the Cērās and their country.

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6. Maduraik: 55-56.
7. Naccinārkkiniyar's commentary on Neṭunalvāṭai: 188.
8. Maduraik: 523-526.
9. Naccinārkkiniyar's commentary on Madurai-k-Kāñci: 127 : 130.

CHAPTER II

PATINEN–KIL–K–KANAKKU

It has been agreed by scholars, that the last Tamil Sangham came to an end in the second century A.D. The middle of third century saw the irruption into Tamil Nadu of Pallavas and their ascendancy. That, there is not a single reference to the Pallavas in any of the Sangham classics, is a proof positive that the famous Tamil Academy had ceased to function even before the Pallava rule commenced over the land. At about 250 A.D. the drop scene was rung over the great drama of the history of the Tamils and it did not rise up again till about the middle of the sixth century A.D. This interregnum has been aptly designated the 'Dark Age' of Tamil Nadu. The incursions of the Kalabras, the alien hordes whose language and culture were quite foreign and hostile to those of the Tamils, and the establishment of the Pallava dynasties gave a fillip to the growth of languages like Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali, and encouraged the spread of Jainism and Buddhism and the Tantric cults. Tamil lay dormant. Yet during this interval several didactic treatises were composed in verse form, inspired by the reformist faiths of Jainism and Buddhism. A selected collection of eighteen of these works came to be styled later as the 'Patiṉeṇkīḻ-k-kaṇakku'.

The works belonging to this anthology have no connection with the Tamil classics in their scope, poetic form or style. Of these eighteen works, Kaḷavaḻi nāṟpatu written by Poykaiyār relates to a fight in which a Cērā king distinguished himself in military might, literary taste and generosity. Hence Kaḷavaḻi nāṟpatu is taken up for study in this chapter.

KAḶAVAḺI NĀṞPATU

Of the eighteen treatises called, Kīḻkkaṇakku Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu is the only one which deals with the heroic deeds performed in wars. Tolkāppiyam defines the Kaḷavaḻi compositions as verses dealing with the ploughing of fields and battle-fields.[1] Nacciṉārk-kiṉiyar states, while commenting on Tolkāppiyam cūttirams, that the poet of Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu has sung on the theme of Kaḷavaḻi and quotes the thirty-sixth verse in it to illustrate his remark.[2]

Iḷampūraṇar, the earliest of the Tolkāppiyam commentators has quoted a verse from Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu as an instance of songs relating to the acclamation of heroic deeds on a battle-field. All the forty verses comprising this treatise end with the term 'Kaḷattu'. 'Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu' means 'forty verses dealing with heroic achievements on the battle-field'. It is very likely, that a class of poetic composition called 'Paraṇi', dealing with the gruesome, bloody scenes of battles were later developments on Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu.[3] The Ilakkaṇa-p-paṭṭiyal, a work on poetics[4] and the commentary on Dandiyalankaram,[5] claim that the composition of Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu was intended for the purpose of singing the glories of a battle-field.

Historical events alluded to in Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu:

There is a note appended at the end of Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu, which remarks thus: "There was a battle fought between the Cōḷa monarch Ceṅkaṇāṉ and the Cērā king Kaṇaikkāl Irumpoṟai, in which the later suffered a defeat and was imprisoned by the Cōḷa king. Poykaiyār sang the Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu and secured

1. Tol: Puṟattiṇai iyal: 21.
2. Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar's commentary.
3. Prof. T. P. Meenakshisundaram Pillai; History of Tamil Literature, p. 62.
4. I. V. Pāṭṭiyal: 851.
5. D. Alankaram: Old commentary.

the release of the Cērā king". From this guide-note we learn of the occurrence and armed conflict between Ceṅkaṇāṉ and Kaṇaikkāl Irumpoṟai which ended in the defeat and imprisonment of the latter, and that the poet Poykaiyār sang a panegyric on the glorious success won by the Cōla king, and, in turn, obtained from his hands the release of the Cērā king.

Nowhere in Kaḷavaḷi Nāṟpatu has the Cōḷa king been referred to by his true name. He has been variously called by appellations such as Puṉalnāṭaṉ,[6] Nīrnāṭaṉ,[7] Kāviri Nāṭaṉ,[8] Kāviri Nīrnāṭaṉ,[9] Cempiyaṉ[10] etc. Scholars have held that the appellations Ceṅkaṇmāl[11] and Ceṅkaṉ Ciṉamāl[12] are not indicative of the real names of the king, but are merely references to Tirumāl.[13] The Cērā king had been called 'Vañcikkō' in only one context,[14] and elsewhere by various epithets denoting an enemy. The chief of the Koṅgu country also took part in the fighting as an ally of the Cērā king.[15] Contrary to the information contained in the note appended to Kaḷavaḷi Nāṟpatu, the text itself discusses that the Cērā king was killed in the battle. The old commentary on this composition interprets the terms 'Vañcikkō aṭṭa Kaḷattu' as the battle-field in which the Cērā king was killed.

The episode relating to Pokaiyār's singing Kaḷavaḷi Nāṟpatu and obtaining the release of the Cērā king is referred to in Kaliṅkattu-p-paraṇi,[16] Mūvarulā[17] and Tamiḻviṭu-tūtu[18] as well as

6. K. nāṟpatu: 1, 9, 10, 14, 16, 20, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 36, 37 and 39.
7. -do- 3, 8, 17, 22, 23 and 41.
8. -do- 7, 12, and 35.
9. -do- 24.
10. -do- 23, 33 and 38.
11. -do- 4, 5 and 11.
12. -do- 15, 21, 29, 30 and 41.
13. P. K. Kaṇakku: Murray S. Rajam's edition p. 406.
14. -do- K. Nāṟpatu: 39.
15. -do- 14.
16. K. Paraṇi: 182.
17. M. ulā: I: 14; II: 19–20: III: 18.
18. T. V. Tūtu: 56

in an anonymous verse quoted by Naccinārkkiṉiyar.[19] But we are perplexed with the note appended to a verse in Puṟanāṉūṟu,[20] which tells us that the verse was composed by Cērāmāṉ Kaṇaikkāl Irumpoṟai under tragic circumstances. The Cērā monarch was caught as a prisoner in the battle and was imprisoned. He was very thirsty and beckoned for water but it was denied. But when subsequently water was brought to him, he refused to accept it, wrote this verse and died. There is no mention in this note either about Poykaiyār or about the release of the Cērā king. There have been scholarly attempts to show that there was no conflict of information between Kaḷavaḷi Nāṟpatu and Puṟanāṉūṟu by interpreting the word 'tuñciya' found in the note to the Puṟanāṉūṟu verse as 'having fainted'[21] or 'having slept'.[22] But in Tamil literature we find, that the word 'tuñciya' is frequently used to mean 'died' only. Hence, it will be more appropriate to presume that the Cērā king actually died on the battle-field.

The author of 'Tamil Nāvalar Caritai' very ingenuously connects the Puṟanāṉūṟu and Kaḷavaḷi informations and says that Kaṇaikkāl Irumpoṟai wrote the Puṟanāṉūṟu verse and sent it to Poykaiyār, who, on receipt of it, hurried to the battle-field, composed his Kaḷavaḷi Nāṟpatu, and secured the release of the king from Cōḷaṉ Ceṅkaṇāṉ.[23]

There is an allusion in an Akanāṉūṟu verse to a Cōḷa monarch defeating a chieftain called Kaṇaiyaṉ at Kaḷumalam.[24] The author of the early commentary on the anthology, has remarked that Naṉṉaṉ was the commander of the Cērā army and Kaṇaiyaṉ, was the commander-in-chief. In another Akanāṉūṟu

19. "செய்கை யரிய களவழிப்பா முன்செய்த
பொய்கை ஒருவனால் போந்தரமோ—சைய
மலைச்சிறைதீர் வாட்கண்டன் வெள்ளணிநாள் வாழ்த்திக்
கொலைச்சிறைதீர் வேந்துக் குழாம்."

20. Puṟa: 74.

21. Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer: Sanghat-t-tamiḷum Piṟkāla-t-tamiḷum p. 94.

22. E. V. Anantarama Iyer, K. naṟpatu Edition, Foreward p. 12.

23. T. N. Caritai: pp. 130-131.

24. Aka: 44.

verse, there is a reference to a Kaṇaiyaṉ, a pugilist.[25] But there appears to have been no connection between these two Kaṇaiyaṉs and Kaṇaikkāl Irumporai. The battle fought by Kaṇaiyaṉ could not have been the one immortalised in Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu.

The Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu fighting took place at a place called 'Pōr'. Some Sangham poems indicate that this place was in Cōḷā country. According to an Akam poem[26] and a Naṟṟiṇai[27] poem, Pōr is claimed to have belonged to Paḻaiyaṉ. Paḻaiyaṉ was a chieftain under the Cōḷā king. This name 'Pōr' might have been acquired a prefix 'Tiru' and changed to 'Tiruppōr' or it might have been corrupted into 'Tiruppūr'.[28] Paḻaiyaṉ's Pōr is stated to have been a fertile place according to the Akanāṉūṟu poem, and, as such, could not have been a suitable place for a military engagement. Hence the place could have been situated in the Cērā country. The colophon appended to a Puṟanāṉūṟu poem records the fact, that Kaḷāttalaiyār sang the poem mourning over Cērāmāṉ Kuṭakkō Neṭuñcērālātaṉ who fought with Veṟpaḵṟaṭakkai-p-Perunaṟkiḷḷi and, receiving a morta wound, died a lingering death.[29] Perhaps there had been two places called 'Pōr' one in the Cōḷā and the other in the Cērā countries fated to be the scenes of bloody battles.

There is a reference in the early commentary on Kulōttuṅka Cōḻaṉ Ulā[30] to a 'Tañcai Vijayalayaṉ', who won a victory over the Cērā king called, 'Poṟaiyaṉ'. On the basis of this note Prof. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai characteristically concluded, that Kalavaḻi Nāṟpatu should be assigned to 850 A.D. the period of Vijayalayaṉ.[31] But Thiru N. M. Venkataswamy Nattar,[32] Thiru T. V. Sadasiva

25. Aka: 386.

26. -do- 326.

27. Naṟ: 10.

28. P. K. kaṇakku : Murray Rajam's Edition, p. 408.

29. Puṟa: 368.

30. M. ula: II: 20 Commentary.

31. Ilakkiya Maṇimālai, p. 113.

32. K. nāṟpatu, Kazhagam Edition, Foreword, p. 6.

Pandārathār[33] and Dr. S. Vidyanandham[34] are of a different view. They believe that Cōḷaṉ Ceṅkaṇāṉ, Cēraṉ Kaṇaikkāl Irumpoṟai and Poykaiyār, all the three belonged to the Sangham period.

The Author

Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu was composed by Poykaiyār. It has not been possible to guess, whether this name was a real one or a derivative. If it is the latter, it must mean that he was a native of a country or a place called, 'Poykai'. As he composed the Kaḷavaḻi for the benefit of a Cērā king, he should have belonged to the Cērā country. The poet bearing the same name, who sung three poems included in the Sangham classics,[35] should have been a different person belonging to an earlier period. He has praised Cērāmāṉ Kōkkōtai Mārpaṉ. He belonged to Tondi, an ancient sea-port on the west coast.[36]

Poykaiyāḻvār, the Vaishnava saint, was different from these two Poykaiyārs.[37] He belonged to Kāñcipuram in Tondai Nadu. He is credited with the authorship of Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu by Mahavidvan Raghava Aiyangar.[38] A great saint, who praised none but God Tirumāl[39] would not have condescended to sing on the ephemeral glory of kings. Some verse quoted in the commentary on Yapparuṅkala Virutti are ascribed to Poykaiyār. There are grounds to believe, that this poet was quite different from the other Poykaiyārs discussed above. We may therefore, set down that there flourished a number of poets answering to the name of Poykaiyār during different periods in the past. The Poykaiyār, who wrote Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu, can be presumed to

33. Tamil Ilakkiya Varalāṟu I, 250-600 A.D: pp. 71-77.

34. Tamiḻar Cālpu (Caṅka Kālam): p. 25.

35. Naṟ: 18 and Puṟa: 48 and 49.

36. Puṟa: 48 : 4-5.

37. Thiru K. Subramania Pillai, Ilakkiya Varalāṟu, p. 191.

38. Āḻvārkaḷ Kāla-nilai, p. 27.

39. N. T. Prabandam; 31, 64 and 94.

have lived somewhere about the time, when the authors of Cīvakacintāmaṇi and Peruṅkatai lived.[40]

The Poem:

Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu treats us with a spectacular description of the savage fighting, of the elephant warfare, and of the unflinching heroism exhibited by the warriors in the thick of the battle.

More than half the number of verse comprising Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu, deal with the gallant performance of the elephants in the war.[41]

The Cērā army was distinguished by the mighty 'elephentry' it proudly possessed. The Cērā country abounded in elephants, and it was but natural that these animals should have been pressed into service in very large numbers. The elephant attack launched on this enemy by the Cērā king, should have been formidable and terrific.[42] The poet takes an inhuman pleasure in painting a bloody picture of the fiendish fight of the ferocious animals, of the grisly scene of the huge limbs and trunks of the animals torn and strown all over the battle-field, and of the streams of blood that washed the battle-field.[43]

The war-drums thundered;[44] the carrion-crows diving in the pools of blood glowed ruddy.[45] Spears whizzed and swords rattled and clanged.[46] Warriors fell, torn to pieces and crushed.[47] The sight of the field was ghastly and appalling.[48] The sinister birds of prey and the predatory beasts like foxes got satiated with the

40. P. K. Kaṇakku: Murray Rajam's edition, p. 410.
41. K. Nāṟpatu: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27. 30, 31, 35, 37, 38 and 41.
42. -do- 25.
43. -do- 12, 13, 19, 21.
44. -do- 2.
45. -do- 5.
46. -do- 33.
47. -do- 9.
48. -do- 17.

enormous feast of flesh and blood spread before them.[49] The young widows of the valiant warriors, killed in fight, ran around the field weeping and wailing.[50]

The composition and structure of the poem :

Kaḷavaḻi consists of forty-one verses.

Poykaiyār has, at his command, a rich vocabulary. He could employ seventeen different terms to denote an enemy.[51] The Cōḻā monarch is referred to as 'Cēy', 'Ceṅkaṇmāl', 'Ceṅkaṭciṉamāl,' 'Puṉal Nāṭaṉ,' 'Puṉal Nīr Nāṭaṉ,' 'Nīr Nāṭaṉ,' 'Kaviri Nāṭaṉ,' 'Cempiyaṉ' and 'Ceḻiyaṉ.'

Literary and historical evidences testifying to the battle at Kaḻumalam :

It is reported that there is now a place called, Kaṇaiyaṉūr situated in the territory till recently lying in Cochin state. Kaḻumalam is identified with it. There are verses available in Akanāṉūṟu which bear evidence to the fact that Kaḻumalam was in the Cērā country.[52] Certain Travancore inscriptions affirm that the countries of Naṉṉaṉ, Ēṟṟai and others who took part in the Kaḻumalam fight were all situated in Kuṭṭa Nādu.[53] It is this Kaḻumalam which later came to be called Kaṇaiyaṉūr after Kaṇaiyaṉ, according to prof. Auvai Duraiswami Pillai.[54]

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49. K. Nāṟpatu: 20.

50. -do- 29.

51. அடங்கார் (30); உடற்றியார் (*18*); . ஒன்னார் (*31*); காய்ந்தார் (32); கூடார் (*12, 22, 41*); செற்றார் (*23*); தப்பியார் (*1*, 3, 5); துன்னார் (38); தெவ்வர் (*10*, 26, *33*, *37*); தெவ்வேந்தர் (6); நண்ணார் (8, *24*, *28*); நேரார் (*9*, *20*); பொருந்தார் (7); புல்லார் (*4*); மாற்றார் (*36*); மைந்திகந்தார் (*11*); மேவார் (25, 27, *36*).

52. Aka: 44 and 270.

53. T. A. S. Vol. III: pp. 10, 20.

54. Prof. Auvai S. Duraiswami Pillai, Patiṉeṇ-kīḻ-k-kaṇakku-c-coṟpoḻivukaḷ; Talaimai-urai. p. 29.

The army and its four wings:

In twenty five verses of Kaḷavaḷi Nāṟpatu, we have references to the 'elephantry,' [55] in two to Cavalry,[56] in one to the Chariot-force[57] and in nine to the infantry.[58]

The valour of the warriors:

The fearless warriors could fight fiercely, daringly and desparately. The opposing elephant-men and their mounts crash before them like huge trees struck by a severe cyclone.[59]

The battle-fields:

Umbrella:

Three of the verses contain an information that the Cērā kings flaunted white coloured victorious umbrella.[60] They also contain vivid description of the mighty elephants moving down the umbrellas with their trunks and, in turn, getting them severed by swords.

Flags:

The flying royal standards are held aloft, on huge elephants.[61]

Drums:

The proud war-drums are sounded like the clouds.[62] They are decorated with garlands of flowers;[63] they roar like thunders.[64]

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55. K. Nāṟpatu: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 30, 31, 35, 37, 38, 40 and 41.
56. -do- 16, 36.
57. -do- 4.
58. -do- 13, 16, 17, 23, 24, 26, 28, 31 and 41.
59. -do- 24.
60. -do- 15, 22 and 39.
61. -do- 25.
62. -do- 3.
63. -do- 32.
64. -do- 2.

Weapons:

The lance was long, bright and sharp.[65] The arrows were fierce and swift and were of many kinds.[66] They looked like human-eyes.[67] The swords,[68] the spears,[69] and the shields[70] were also the weapons of offence and defence employed in the Cērā army.

The Kārttikai Festival:

One of the verses contains an information on the observance of the Kārttikai festival and decorations of the houses with strings of lighted-lamps on that day.[71]

Similes:

The simile is the main figure of speech, found employed in Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu. Each of the forty verses contains a simile. The similes employed in the poems of Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu are all very suggestive.

The forty verses contained in Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpatu, not only sparkle with literary embellishments, but also provide us with much evidence regarding the warfare of the Cērās.

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65. K. Nāṟpatu: 5, 13 and 34.
66. -do- 5 and 12.
67. -do- 13.
68. -do- 22.
69. -do- 23 and 35.
70. -do- 28.
71. -do- 17.

CHAPTER III

EPICS

An epic is a long story narrating an incident or incidents connected with the exploits of a king or a chieftain, and told in a manner and style at once gripping on the imagination of the readers. It may hold out a moral or may not necessarily. It may end in an abrupt tragedy or drag on to a happy ending. While most of the epics of the world would conform to this conventional definition of an epic, the epic story of Cilappatikāram would admit of modification to the conventional definition. It is not very long; it is only just half as long as Virgil's Aeneid. It is a direct narrative of an incident that happened in the life, not of a king or a chieftain, but a commoner. It emphasises, not on the grand exploits of a powerful monarch, but on the very ordinary life of a young and wealthy merchant highly cultured and accomplished, with all his human failings, but caught in the grip of the iron low of destiny. Kaṇṇaki enters into the life of Kōvalaṉ as an unassuming sweetly coy bride of twelve, lost in the aura of the tempestuous grandeur of Mātavi, a highly accomplished courtezan who makes her debut in the narrative in a most striking and pleasant manner. As the theme of the epic unfolds, the hero-hood of the story shifts to Kaṇṇaki who had grown taller yet taller, in the faminine virtues of chastity and patience and who projects her image on the canvass of the narrative as an intolerant heroine of very great proportions seeking for justice in the court of the Pāndiyan king Neṭuñceḻiyaṉ, and in agony calling for vengeance on the city of Madurai. As the epic draws to its end, Kaṇṇaki is defied to shine for all time to come as an example and protector of feminine virtues. Of course, Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ, the Cērā monarch who is none other than the elder brother of the author of the epic, assumes heroic roles in his exploits in the campaigns against the chiefs of the plains of River Ganges. But, the hereoic deeds of the monarch were

but dedicated to the service of Kaṇṇaki and to the glorification of the Pattiṉi cult. We find, that Cilappatikāram is an epic of the common man, told for the common people.

The epic is not merely a literary gem. It also enshrines in it, sweet songs, that linger in our memories, and the artistic dances of a courtezan as well as the simple dances of the rural folk. It has therefore eminent claims to be called, a Muttamil-k-kāppiyam, that is, an epic of the three aspects of Tamil.

In this chapter, a study of the epic is attempted to emphasise on the part, the king and the people of the Cērā country had played in the tragic drama of Kaṇṇaki.

1. THE POLITICAL CONDITIONS OF THE CĒRĀ COUNTRY AS DEPICTED IN THE EPIC, CILAPPATIKĀRAM

During the period of the South Indian history covered by the great Tamil Epic, Cilappatikāram, the land was ruled over by three kings, the Cērās, the Cōḷās and the Pāndiyās. The Cērā monarch ruled over the Cērā country from Vañci as his capital. Pukar was the famous capital of the Cōḷās. Māvaṇkiḷḷi, also called Kiḷḷivaḷavaṉ, succeeded Karikālvaḷavaṉ to the throne. Neṭuñceḷiyaṉ, who had annexed to his name the proud title "Āriyappaṭai Kaṭanta" (he who crushed the armies of the Aryans) reigned from Madurai. Prince Veṟṟivēṟceḷiyaṉ, the younger brother of Neṭuñceḷiyaṉ, was functioning as a petty chief under his brother, with Koṟkai, the sea-port town on the east coast as the seat of his administration. Andhra Pradesh, adjoining the Tamil-nadu on the north was under the sway of Satakarnis. Further north, the country had been divided into a number of petty independent states under various chieftains, among whom Kanaka and Vijaya, the sons of Bālakumara appear to have been prominent. Ceylon was under the reign of Gajabahu.

The royal insignia of the Cērās, the Cōḷās and the Pāndiyās were the bow, the tiger and the fish (Cyprinus finiriatus) respectively. The Cērā donned the Palmyra garland (Borassus flavellifer), the Cōḷā wore the 'Ātti' garland (Bauhinia Racenosa) the Pāndiyā put on the 'Vēmpu' (Azadirachta indica) garland. The Cērā country under its king Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ possessed a powerful army mightier than that of the Cōḷā country or the Pāndiyā country. The Cērā forces could be mobilised in a short time, to over-run the countries lying all around. When nine pretenders laid claim to the Cōḷā throne, Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ quelled their revolt single-handed and offered the crown to his brother-in-law, Kiḷḷivaḷavaṉ.[1] This incident proves, beyond doubt, the invincible power of the

1. Cilap: 27: 117–123.

Cērā army. Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ had several other glorious victories to his credit. He had virtually enjoyed a leadership denied to the Cōḷā and the Pāndiyā kings. This fact is borne out by these words of Villavaṉkōtai, the minister, addressed to king Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ.

"Seal it (the message) with your clay seal bearing the image of the bow, the fish and the tiger, the emblems of the Tamil country and despatch it to all the kings of the North."[2]

During the time of Cilappatikāram, Makkaṭṭāyam, the paternal line of descent and not the Marumakkaṭṭāyam, the maternal line of descent was in practice among the Cērā kings. This claim is supported by sufficient proof within the epic itself. It is the inference of some scholars that the Cērā kings had adopted the matrilineal system.[3] But, it is not warranted by facts. Iḷaṅkō-vaṭikaḷ, the famous ascetic author of Cilapatikāram, has himself indicated in 'Varantaru-kātai,' that, he renounced all thought of the burdens of this earth when an astrologer predicted that he would ascend the throne and not his elder brother Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ. This event, that occurred during the early life of the author is revealed by the god-possessed Devanti.[4] This incident is a proof positive that the patrilineal, and not the matrilineal, system was in vogue, among the Cērās.

It is the usual practice for the son or the brother of reigning monarch, who was next in the line of succession to function as a governor of a petty principality and to be trained for his future royal duties. When Pāndiyan Neṭuñceḻiyaṉ died, his younger brother Veṟṟivēṟceḻiyaṉ, who had been governing over Koṟkai succeeded to the throne assuming the regal name Naṉmāṟaṉ.[5]

The king was the head of the state, the chief commander of his forces and enjoyed sovereign rights over the country. No

2. Cilap: 27 : 170–172.

3. Thiru M. Srinivasa Iyengar, Tamil Studies pp. 272–273.

4. Cilap: 30 : 170–184.

5. -do- 27 : 124–138.

limit was set to his rights and prerogatives. His subjects loved him and had great respect for him, Minstrels sang his glories, the great prestige and reputation he enjoyed. The king's happiness lay in the happiness of the people. He was aware of the fact, that "uneasy lies the head that wears the crown". He knew that failure of seasonal rains and famine and pet pestilence would be attributed to him.[6] Iḷaṅkōvaṭikaḷ has compared a tyrant to the scorching summer sun. He informs us, that Kōvalaṉ, Kaṇṇaki and Kauntiyaṭikaḷ decided to avoid the daytime for their travel and preferred the cool moon-lit nights even as the subject of a tyrant would anxiously wait for the departure of their monarch.[7] The Brahmin from Māṅkāṭu who meets these travellers on their way to Madurai, advises them on the best route to Madurai they could follow. He compares the mountain tracts that have turned to deserts under the burning sun of summer, to a great kingdom whose king had diverted from the path of right policy under the influence of an evil counsellor and which thereby, met with its ruin.[8]

The king was advised in his administration, by two Councils, called 'Aimperuṅkuḻu'[9] and 'Eṇpērāyam'.[10] The former consisted of the ministers to the king, the purohits (priests) the commander-in-chief of the army, an ambassador and a spy.[11] The latter was an assembly of eight officials, the superintendent of the accounts, the head of the executive, the treasury officer, the chamberalain, the representative of citizens, the commander of the army, and the chiefs of the elephant and cavalry divisions

6. Cilap : 25 : 100–104.

7. -do- 13 : 15–16.

8. -do- 11 : 60–66.

9. -do- 5 : 157 and 26 : 38.

10. -do- -do-

11. ஐம்பெருங்குழு :—"அமைச்சர், புரோகிதர், சேனுபதியர், தவாத் தொழிற்றூதுவர் சாரணரென்றிவர், பார்த்திபர்க் கைம்பெருங் குழு வெனப்படுமே" எனுமிவர்.

—அடியார்க்கு நல்லார் உரை (சிலம்பு : 5 : 157–160)

of the army.[12] The monarch also listened to the counsels of the officiating priests, experts in accounts, trustees of charitable institutions, adepts in military operations and the chief astrologer. The king had invariably consulted these counsellors whenever occasion demanded. Those who assisted the king in his administrative functions were called 'mantira-c-Curram'[13] a king's counsellors.

Villavankōtai was the reputed minister of Cēran Ceṅkuṭṭuvan. He possessed all the rare characteristics, which Saint Tiruvaḷḷuvar would attribute to an ideal minister. He was, in the words of the saint, a minister who was wise in the dispensation of his means and seasoned and appropriate in action, and was skilled in the execution of the enterprices entrusted to him.[14] Aḷumpilvēḷ, another minister,[15] possessed the required political acumen and sagacity to suggest to the monarch, that it was enough to proclaim his projected North Indian expedition in Vañci by tom-tom as there were foreign spies operating in the capital anxious to report it to their respective countries.[16] From this, we can conclude that, in every country, foreign spies were operating secretly and vigilantly. When the Cērā king swore vengeance on the kings of the North Indian principalities for their reported insolance to the three Tamil kings, the Royal Purohit advised him to curb his anger [17] The Purohit was called the 'Ācān', as he, being a member of the administrative set-up, was a limb of the state. 'Tūtuvars' were a class of officers entrusted with the duty of carrying the royal messages to foreign courts. They also assisted the king by attending to their petty commands during military campaigns. Sanjayan was the chief of the

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12. எண்பேராயம் :—"கரணத்தியலவர் கருமகாரர், கனகச்சுற்றங் கடை காப்பாளர், நகரமாந்தர் நளிபடைத்தலைவர், யானைவீரரிவுளி மறவர், இனையரெண்பே ராயமென்ப" எனுமிவர்.

—அடியார்க்கு நல்லார் உரை (*சிலம்பு : 5 : 157–160*)

13. Cilap: 16: 137.

14. Kuṟaḷ: 631.

15. Cilap: 25: 177 Thiru N. M. Venkataswamy Nattar's commentry.

16. -do- 25: 173–177.

17. -do- 26: 19–24.

'Tūtuvar' corps of Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ.[18] He was charged with the duty of securing with the assistance of the Satakarnis sufficient number of boats to ferry the invading Cērā army across the river Ganges.[19] The accoutrement of the Tūtuvars included shirts and turbans.[20] They were therefore called, 'Kañcuka mutalvar' (the 'shirted chiefs'). It is through a 'Keñcuka mutalvar' that Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ despatched to the Pāndiyā king, his sealed acknowledgement of the receipt of tributes from the latter.[21] Cilappatikāram compliments the spies called 'Cāraṇar' as constituting the eyes of the king. It is their duty to spread out in the foreign countries, and collect and send secret intelligence to their kings regarding the state of affairs obtaining in those places.[22]

Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ had all the sources of income available to him for exploitation, which Saint Tiruvaḷḷuvar prescribes as necessary for a monarch. Apart from the inheritance that came to him, he obtained income from royal levies and the contributions paid by his vanquished foes.[23] From 'Kāṭci-k-Kātai' we learn that the Kuṟava chiefs of the hilly tracts brought him elephant tusks, bundles of peacock-feathers, fly-whisks made of stag-hair; pots full of sweet honey, dried splints of fragrant sandalwood, vermilion, lumps of collyrium, globules of deer musk, cardamom seeds, black pepper, crushed tapioca roots, succulant 'Kavalai' creeper, coconuts, juicy mango fruits, garlands of verdant leaves, fatty jack fruits, garlic, sugar-cane, vines bearing beautiful fragrant blossoms, bunches of kamugu nuts, huge bunches of banana fruits, young ones of lions, tigers and deer, baby elephants, baby monkeys, young ones of bears and musk deer, fleet-footed mountain sheep, the shy spotted deer, mangooses, civet cats, wild fowl and sweet tongued parrots.[24]

18. Cilap : 26 : 145.
19. -do- 26 : 145–155.
20. -do- 26 : 138 —உரை 'சட்டையிட்ட பிரதானர்'.
21. Cilap : 26, 166–175.
22. -do- 25 : 175–176.
23. Kuṟaḷ : 755.
24. Cilap : 25 : 37–54.

Enemies, shut up in state prisons were set free on the occasion of the royal birth days.[25] Taxes were reduced by Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ while celebrating the consecration of the temple of Kaṇṇaki.[26]

The King's reign was just and impartial. Kōvalaṉ euologises, of course, with over enthusiasm, the equity of the Pāndiyan's justice in these words: "In the Pāndiya country the bears will have lost their fierceness; tigers will not kill the deer, snakes will not bite, crocodiles will not attack the unwary and thunder may he ignored here. The Courts of Justice were called the 'Abodes of Dharma'. The members of the 'Aimperuṅkuḷu' took a major part in the deliberations of the Courts of Justice. Any citizen may appear for justice directly to the King. Kaṇṇaki approaching the king directly, demanding justice for her cause. When the King Pāndiyan Neṭuñceḻiyaṉ learnt that he had erred grievosuly in punishing Kōvalaṉ with death, he fell down from his throne and died on the spot.[28] There are several such striking instances of supreme consciousness of mis-judgement and the infliction of self punishment in Tamil literature. We have the classic example of Pāndiyā king who earned the name, 'Pāndiyan of golden arm' by an act of supreme sacrifice involving loss of his arm.[29]

The King wielded a large army consisting of the infantry, the cavalry, fighters mounted on horse-drawn cars, and the warriors who rode on elephants.[30] The army of Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ, employed in his North Indian expeditions, was spectacular in its composition. It included a hundred chariots, five hundred elephants, ten-thousand horses, twenty-thousand carts creaking under loads of ration, one hundred and two dancers, hundred

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25. Cilap: 28 : 195-196.
26. -do- 28 : 203-204.
27. -do- 13 : 5-10.
28. -do- 20 : 73-78.
29. -do- 23 : 42-53.
30. -do- 26 : 86-87.

jesters, two hundred and eight bandsmen and thousand officers, of the King.[31] In one of his flights of poetic imagination Iḷaṅkōvaṭikaḷ remarks, that the land yielded under the heavy tramp of Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ's army.[32] Cilappatikāram also bears evidence to the fact, that Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ proudly possessed a large and powerful navy, with which he crushed the piracy of the Kadambars.[33]

The king Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ took out punitive expeditions to foreign countries, mostly for the purpose of avenging the chiefs of those lands for their reported affront to the Cērā might and honour, or for their subversion against his suzerainty.[34] Invasions were launched on the auspicious days appointed by the court astrologer.[35] If the king could not commence the march on those days, prevented by unavoidable circumstances, he would still start the royal umbrella and sword, mounted on the court elephant, on a symbolical march on the propitious day. We learn that the great Karikāl Cōḷā[36] and Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ[37] observed this ceremony. Tolkāppiyaṉar refers to this solemn function as 'nāṭkōḷ'.[38] Before commencing the march, the king would feed the troops sumptuously.[39] This is another act of 'Puṟattiṇai' and it is called 'Peruñ-coṟṟu nilai.'[40] The warriors would then commence the advance wearing garlands of 'vañci' flowers.[41] The warriors wore the garlands of 'tumpai' flowers (leucas aspera) in the battle-field. After successful termination of their expedition,

31. Cilap: 26 : 128–138.
32. -do- 26 : 80–82.
33. -do- 25 : 187.
34. -do- 26 : 156–162.
35. -do- 26 : 25–31.
36. -do- 5 : 90–92.
37. -do- 26 : 43–45.
38. Tol. Puṟattiṇai Iyal : 13.
39. Cilap : 26 : 48–49.
40. Tol. Poruḷ. Puṟattiṇai Iyal : 8.
41. Cilap : 26 : 50–51.
42. -do- 26 : 219.

they would return home wearing garlands of 'vākai' flowers (Sirissa flowers).[43]

The warriors who fought heroically in the battles were honoured with titles and decorations, while the sons of those who fell valiantly fighting on the battle-field receiving gifts of 'vākai' flowers, made of gold. Cilappatikāram contains a glorious account of such generosity of the king.[44]

It was a practice in those days to capture the vanquished kings and carry them to the land of the conqueror. Ceṅkuṭṭuvan rounded up enemy chiefs, who escaped from the battle-field dressed like ascetics, dancers and minstrels and took them to Cērā country along with him.[45] The Cōḷā[46] and the Pāndiyā monarchs[47] were critical of this act of the Cērā king as it was not against the code of military ethics of those days to capture those who run away from the field of battle for fear of life.

On the days, when the country was celebrating the birthday anniversaries of the king, there were general rejoicing and holiday from normal work.[48] Ploughing of land ceased;[49] the enemy chiefs detained in captivity were ordered to be released,[50] and some times granted the honour of taking part in the banquets as guests of honour.[51]

It was not unusual for a victor, to restore the defeated chieftains to their possessions and privileges and treat them as his allies.[52]

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43. Cilap : 27 : 36
44. -do- 27 : 25–47.
45. -do- 27 : 177–191.
46. -do- 28 : 90–93.
47. -do- 28 : 104–108.
48. -do- 27 : 212–250.
49. -do- 27 : 227–229.
50. -do- 28 : 195.
51. -do- 28 : 197–198.
52. -do- 28 : 199–202.

It is interesting and gratifying to note, that during the time of the great epic, the major religions of the country, Saivism, Vaishnavism, Buddhism and Jainism went hand in hand; and people practised perfect religious tolerance. Individual members of the same family were allowed to follow the religion of their own choice. There was no religious bickering or persecution. Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ worshipped his family deity, Siva before he left on his north Indian campaigns;[53] but, at the same time he accepted the prasadam (offerings) brought to him by the priest of the Vishnu temple of Tiruvaṉantapuram.[54]

There were temples for all the deities in the three Capitals of the Tamil kings;[55] and religious polemics were held on certain occasions.[56]

Mention is made of 'muttamiḻ' (the three Tamils) Iyal, Icai and Nāṭakam (Literature, music and dance-drama) in Cilappatikāram. Dancers and danseuses accompanied Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ on his expedition to the north. While the king was enjoying amorous hours with his wife on the moonlit terrace of his palace after the successful termination of the hostilities and after a gruelling separation for more than two years, a Cākkiyar dancer of Paṟaiyūr entertained him and the queen with a dance called 'Koṭṭi-c-cētam' depicting the burning of the 'Tripuras' by Siva.[57]

The Cōḻā king honoured Mātavi, after the conclusion of her enchanting dance performance, with the presentation of the title, 'Talaikkōl Arivai', and with gifts of a garland and gold weighing a thousand 'kalañcūs.'[58]

We have instances mentioned in the Sangham literature, of the installation of stones to commemorate heroes who died

53. Cilap: 26 : 54–57.
54. -do- 26 : 62–67.
55. -do- 5 : 169–178.
56. -do- 5 : 181.
57. -do- 28 : 42–78.
58. -do- 3 : 159–163.

fighting valiantly in wars.[59] But, it is in Cilappatikāram that we find, for the first time, a stone image being installed for Kaṇṇaki raising her to the status of a Pattiṉi goddess.

People lived happily and without fear under the impartial and wise rule of the kings. The king received unmixed loyalty and love from his subjects. The folk songs accompanying 'Kuravai-k-kūttu', contained invocations to deities to bless the king with honour and glory in battles.[60] The blessings of the newly-weds included blessings of the king also.[61]

The people of the Cērā country revelled in celebrating the receipt of happy tidings regarding their king Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ victories over the chieftains of the distant north. Poets composed songs of panegyrics on the royal garlands of Palmyra,[62] 'Ātti'[63] and 'Vēmpu'[64] flowers.

From the colourful portrayal of the life of the people by Iḷaṅkōvaṭikaḷ during the period of the epic, we are enabled to get a glimpse of the peace and plenty and pleasures and entertainments the people enjoyed under the efficient, impartial and popular rule of their monarchs.

59. Aka: 67 : 8–10, 131 : 8–11; Puṟa : 221 : 11–13.

60. Cilap : 24 : 26.

61. -do- 1 : 64–68.

62. -do- 29 : 28.

63. -do- 29 : 26.

64. -do- 29 : 27.

2. THE SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE PEOPLE AS DEPICTED IN CILAPPATIKĀRAM

The Social life of the people during a particular period in the history of a country, is mirrored in their literary creations.[1] The Sangham classics are treasure-houses of human experiences and gratifications. They provide us with a faithful picture of the conditions of the ancient Tamil Society. Unlike the literary productions of the later times, the Sangham works are found to be free from excessive and heavy embellishments.[2] But Cilappatikāram, though strictly not a Sangham classic, is characteristically free from over-done flourishes.

Tolkāppiyam is, perhaps, the earliest known Tamil composition to have survived in its complete form. It is not only a treatise on grammar but also an exposition on the forms and conditions of the Society existing during the times of Tolkāppiyaṉār, its reputed author. Tolkāppiyaṉār has devoted a whole section of his grammar entitled 'Poruḷatikāram' for this purpose. He recognises the classification of land into four 'tiṇais' or categories called 'mullai,' 'Kuṟiñci,' 'marudam', and 'neytal' but does not speak of 'Pālai' as a seperate 'tiṇai.' It has been noticed merely as parts of the mullai and kuṟiñci tracts scorched by the summer sun and rendered shadeless and forbidding.[3]

The anthology of the ten long idylls called, 'Pattuppāṭṭu' and the seperate collections of poems under different titles together, known as 'Eṭṭuttokai' are usually ascribed to the Sangham period. The Eṭṭuttokai anthologies include poems written by different poets at different times. Assignment of the 'tiṇai' to these compositions was the handiwork of the compilers of these anthologies.

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1. William Henry Hudson, An Introduction to the Study of Literature, p. 2.
2. Dr. M. Varadarajan, Naṟṟiṇai-c-Celvam, Introduction p. 5 and Kuṟuntokai-c-Celvam pp. 9-10.
3. Cilap: 11 ; 64-66.

Composing poems, according to the 'tiṇai' on the land of people dealt with, had commenced very early in the history of Tamil literature. We can easily distinguish the 'tiṇai' of a poem from its description of the land and the people and their manners and customs.

The characteristic tradition of depicting 'tiṇai' in literary productions of the Sangham age, has been continued in Cilappatikāram too.

This great epic, proudly holds the distinguished place of being the very first classic, to handle lengthy narrative type of poems. It is divided into thirty 'kātais'[4] some of them containing vivid descriptions of the social habits and customs of the people and their religious beliefs, as well as glowing accounts of their lively pursuits in the fields of literature and fine arts. We owe much to the versatile author of Cilappatikāram, a jewel among epics, for including in it tuneful folk-songs which otherwise would have been lost to posterity.[5] Iḷaṅkōvaṭikaḷ faithfully continues in his epic, the ancient Tamil tradition of interweaving folk-songs, music and dance with the main theme of the story. The life of the people is inseperable from their literary traditions and one cannot be viewed seperately from the other.[6]

The story of Cilappatikāram is laid in the three Tamil countries namely the Cōḷā, the Pāndiyā and the Cērā Kingdoms. The third and the last section of the epic, 'Vañcik kāṇṭam deals mainly with the Cērā town and its heroic king Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ. It includes 'Kuṉṟa-k-kuravai' a dance-piece consisting of a string of sweet soul-stirring folk-songs which contain a wealth of information on the social life of the 'Kuṟiñci' people who were called 'Kuṟavars.' We learn from it, many interesting details about the land and daily life of the people.

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4. A 'Kātai' is that which contains a story.

5. Dr. M. Varadarajan, Ilaṅkō Adigal p. 57.

6. Thiru M. Shanmugham, Cilappatikāra-k-Kaṭṭuraikaḷ, p. 122.

Life in the hilly region :

The people of Cerā country who were mostly hill-folk worshipped Murugan. They sang 'Koṭicciyar' songs and danced 'Kuravai-k-kūttu.' The young Kuṛava women scared the intruding birds with 'taṭṭais' (Slings made of split bamboos).[7] They pounded tiṉai (a millet) in mortars singing 'vaḷḷai' (pertle) songs. The Kuṛava lads delighted in collecting honey from the beehives built on the top of the hills. Elephant catchers raised loud cries while retrieving wild elephants lured into the deep breaking-in pits. The women revelled in splashing under cascading water falls.[8] The forests and the high mountain ranges were generous in their yield. Mention has already been made of some of the important items of the forest wealth of the Cērā country. The Kuṛiñci folk worshipped Murugan, the presiding deity of Tiruccentūr, Tiruccenkōṭu and Tiruvērakam who protected the Devas by crushing the might of Surapadma.[9]

Kuṛiñci is the region where young lovers united. The theme of love, pertaining to this 'tiṇai' is rich and lively. The beautiful Kuṛava maid pining after her lover despaired of his delay in claiming her hand in wedlock, sulked and languished. Her mother thought that she was possessed by Murugan and sought the good offices of the temple priest to have her exercised. The priest feigned trance and prescribed false remedies. The lady-companion (Tōḻi) ridiculed the knavery of the priest and made a delicate disclosure of the real cause for the sickness of her companion to others. She prayed for the blessing of Murugan for the poor girl, and wished that, she married none other than the young man of her choice.[10]

We find, that the information about the social life of the ancient Tamils furnished by the epic, is almost identical with that furnished by the Sangham classics.

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7. Cilap : 24 : 1.
8. -do- 25 : 26-34.
9. -do- 24 : 8.
10. -do- 24 : 11-20.

Life in the 'mullai' region:

The people living in the mullai tracts were called cowherds. Mātari, the hostess of Kaṇṇaki, was a cowherdess. The cowherds tended cattle and vended milk. The deity of mullai was Tirumāl. The Cowherdess sang his glories and danced a 'Kuravai-k-kūttu'.

Life in 'marutam' region:

Those, who dwelt in 'marutam' were called 'Veḷḷaḷas'. They were cultivators and merchants. They owed their bountiful wealth and welfare to the great river Cauvery which would never fail in seasonal freshes though rains might fail.[12]

Indra was the presiding deity of 'marutam.' The people of Pūmpukār celebrated a lusty festival in his honour, under the royal patronage, for a period of twenty-eight days in the month of Chittirai.[13] During these days, people sang and danced and were in a great spree. Indra, the god of rains, had to be pleased lest he should smite the people with famine and pestilence.[14] Worship was also offered in the temples of Sivā, Murugan, Balaraman and Tirumāl.[15] The carnival was rounded off by the people thronging on the sandy beach, having dips in the sea and drinking the pleasures of life in the amorous company.[16]

Life in the 'neytal' region:

People, who inherited the sea-coast, lived by fishing. The fish, they caught, were dried on the beach watched over by shapely young women. The neytal people were called 'Paratavars, (fisherman).[17]

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11. Cilap : 17 : Āycciyar Kuravai.
12. -do- 7 : 4 and 6 : 30-31.
13. -do- 5 : 64-66 and 6 : 5-6.
14. -do- 5 : 71-73.
15. -do- 5 : 169-173.
16. -do- 6 : 161-174.
17. -do- 7 : 17-22.

Life in the 'Palai' region:

Hunters, highway robbers and cattle-lifters plied their nefarious professions in 'Pālai.' They were unscrupulous people, but with a healthy and strong constitution. They worshipped the Goddess 'Korravai' as fierce and blood thirsty as themselves.[18]

Castes and Communal differences:

The ancient Tamil society was completely free from caste differences and distinctions. But castes slowly began to take shape as professions diversified. The caste differences appear to have assumed so alarming proportions in course of time that Saint Tiruvalluvar had to issue a severe note of warning that "all people are born and equal; no superiority can be claimed by any person merely by the virtue of birth."[19] Differences in profession began to develope into differences by birth. Castes appeared, as we know of them today. People were classified as Brahmins, rulers, merchants and cultivators according to the profession they were engaged in;[20]

Separate streets or portions of towns and cities were marked for each of the castes.[21] Not only people but also the demons (Bhutams) are said to have practiced castes.[22] It is amusing to learn, that there were Brahmins, Kings, traders and Velalars among the Bhutams too.[23]

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18. Cilap: 12 Vettuva Vari.

19. Kural: 972.

20. Cilap: 14: 183.
(நால்வகை வருணத்து நலங்கே ழொளியவும்).

21. -do- 5: 7-68.
"கோவியன் வீதியுங் கொடித்தேர் வீதியும்
பீடிகைத் தெருவும் பெருங்குடி வாணிகர்
மாட மறுகு மறையோ ரிருக்கையும்
வீழ்குடி யுழவரொடு விளங்கிய கொள்கை"—5: 40-43.

22. -do- 3: 107. 'அந்தணர் அரசர் வணிகர் சூத்திரரென்று சொல்லப் பட்ட நால்வகை வருணப் பூதரையும்'—அடியார்க்கு நல்லார் உரை.

23. Cilap: 6: 35 and 22: 108.

Marriage ceremonies :

Tolkāppiyaṉār has ruled that love always preceded marriage. The marriage of Kōvalaṉ with Kaṇṇaki is pronounced by some to have followed a period of courtship.[23a] But many consider that this marriage was arranged by the parents of the couple after previous consultations.[24] The Patikam states, that 'the wealthy parents (of Kōvalaṉ and Kaṇṇaki) longed to see them united in a wedding ceremony.[25] Aṭiyārkkunallār, the commentator of Cilappatikāram has remarked, that the marriage of Kōvalaṉ with Kaṇṇaki conformed to the Praja-patya marriage of the Aryans.[26] We may therefore affirm, that the Tamil practice of 'love and marriage' has not been followed in the case of Kōvalaṉ and Kaṇṇaki.

During the days of the epic, the marriageable age for boys appears to have been sixteen, and for girls twelve.[27] The wedding ceremony was invariably performed on the day, when the moon was in conjunction with the star Rohini (Aldebaran) the first magnitude star of the constellation Hyades. Brahmin purohit officiated in the marriages.[28] Immediately after marriage the bridegroom and the bride were provided with new home of their own.

Women entertained great love and devotion to their husbands. In fact, that they considered them as gods themselves. They served them affectionately and catered to their comforts.

23a. Prof. T. P. Meenakshisundaram, Kuṭi-makkal-Kāppiyam, p. 102.

24. Prof. V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, The Silappadikaram, Introduction p. 57.

25. Cilap : Patikam : 41–42.

26. " இதனைப் பிரசாபத்தியம் என்பர் அடியார்க்கு நல்லார்; அது தமிழில் ஒப்பு என்று கூறப்படும்; ஒப்பாவது மைத்துனக் கோத்திரத்தான் மகள் வேண்டிச் சென்றால் மறுது கொடுப்பது என்பர் "

—திரு. ந. மு. வேங்கடசாமி நாட்டார் உரை.

27. Cilap : 1 : 24–34.

28. -do- 1 : 50–54.

Means of Transport :

During the period of this epic, people travelled mostly on foot.[30] Occasionally, donkeys and carts were also pressed into service.[31] Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ rode over an elephant when he led the expedition to North India.[32] Horses were largely used in military transport.[33] The Cērā monarch mobilised twenty thousand carts for carrying the provisions for the army during his north Indian campaigns.[34]

Belief in fate :

People believed in fate. They had a deep conviction in the immutable law of Karma. Tolkāppiyaṉār uses the term 'pāl' to denote fate.[35] In an oft-quoted verse of his, included in Puṟanāṉūṟu, Kaṇiyaṉ Pūṅkuṉṟaṉār equates life governed by the law of Karma to a boat drifting helplessly with the currents of a river.[36] Saint Tiruvaḷḷuvar has devoted an entire chapter to 'Ūḻ' (Karma). He declares, that fate is inexorable and that it overtakes us by surprise, even if we use to devise a way to counter it. The jains believed, that in some form, the Karma would recoil on us.[38] The Patikam of Cilappatikāram avows, that the main purpose of his writing the epic was to emphasise three main moral principles, one of which is the immutability of the law of Karma. We find frequent reference to fate in this epic.[40]

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29. Cilap : 2 : 84–85.
30. -do- 10 : 38.
31. -do- 6 : 119–120.
32. -do- 26 : 60.
33. -do- 26 : 84 and 134.
34. -do- 26 : 135–136.
35. Tol. Col : 58.
36. Puṟa : 192.
37. Kuṟaḷ : 380.
38. Cilap : 14 : 31–34.
39. Patikam : 55–57.
40. Cilap : 7 : 52; 9 : 78–79; 10 : 4; 16 : 148–153; 16 : 154–157; 16 : 212–217; 19 : 41–42; 19 : 45–46; 19 : 49–50; 20 : 59–63; 23 : 27–30; 23 : 171–172; 24 : 5–6; 27 : 49–52; 27 : 57–65; 29 : 3.

Its author quotes several instances of events occurring under the instrumentality of Karma.

The very first reference to fate or Karma appears in 'Kāṉal vari' (the song on the sandy beach). Kōvalaṉ, the hero of the epic, who resorts to the beach to spend some time in the enjoyable company of his mistress, the beautiful Mātavi, falls a victim to the fate which was waiting to catch him in the guise of a tuneful lute. He leaves her, once for all.[41] The author appears to have been so much obsessed with this divine law, that he connect it with many major events in the story.[42]

Faith in the law of Karma involves belief in incarnations. Saint Tiruvaḷḷuvar also believes in rebirth.[43]

From the copious instances of fate, controlling the lives of people, quoted in Cilappatikāram, we have every reason to conclude, that belief in this supernatural law had taken a deep root in the philosophical concepts of the people of Cilappatikāram period.

Belief in Dreams:

In Cilappatikāram, dreams have been referred to, on three occasions. The Tamils of those days believed, that dreams presaged the events that were to follow. The dream dreamt by Kaṇṇaki at Pukār just before Kōvalaṉ repented and returned to her arms[44], the dream that frightened Kōvalaṉ while he and Kaṇṇaki were staying in the outskirts of Madurai,[45] and the dream over which Pandimā Devi was much agitated,[46] all turned out to be prophetic of the evils that were waiting to overwhelm them.

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41. Cilap : 7 : 52.
42. -do- 27 : 49–51.
43. Kuraḷ : 8, 10, 62.
44. Cilap : 9 : 45–54.
45. -do- 15 : 95–106.
46. -do- 20 : 1–12.

Belief in Omens:

Belief in omens, appears to have been very much, in vogue with the ancient Tamils. Cilappatikāram contains many instances of evil omens, bringing evil occurrences in their wake.[47]

Belief in auspicious days:

Auspicious days and propitious time were selected both by the ordinary folk and kings for commencing important functions. The day, on which the moon was in conjunction with the star Rohini was chosen for the celebrations of the marriage of Kōvalaṉ with Kaṇṇaki.[48] When he found, that he could not commence his march towards North against the king of the Gangetic valley on the auspicious day, appointed for the purpose, Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ, however, arranged for a symbolical start of the journey by sending his umbrella and sword in advance.[49]

Belief in curses:

People believed in curses and redemption from them. We have ample proof for their Credulousness occuring in the epic. Kavunti Aṭikaḷ cursing the slanderers of Kōvalaṉ and Kaṇṇaki to become howling jackals, followed by her conditional redemption,[50] the existence of an old curse, according to which the city of Madurai was to go up in flames on an appointed day,[51] and the curse of one Nīli in her previous birth visiting in this birth are all instances in evidence.[52]

Dress and ornaments:

The ancient Tamils led a luxurious life. Some of the ornaments and the finery they wore must be, indeed, the envy of the modern times. We are astounded by the variety of the jewels and clothes, in vague, in those days. Mātavai dressed in

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47. Cilap: 5 : 237–239; 16 : 98–101 and 17 : 5.
48. -do- 1 : 50–51.
49. -do- 26 : 44–45.
50. -do- 10 : 231–245.
51. -do- 21 : 49–52.
52. -do- 23 : 149–178.

superfine clothes, decked herself with jewels, adorned her hair with fragrant flowers, painted her eyes with collyrium and put on anklets to embellish her feet.[53]

Commerce and Trade:

Reference has already been made to the various products of commercial value for which the Cērā country was famous. Some of these goods had found a profitable market in the mediterranean countries of Europe. Pepper, ginger, peacock feathers and elephant tusks from the Cērā country were in great demand there.

Fine Arts:

The ancient Tamils were famous for their predilection and love for music and dancing. They could paint and carve too. While we are very much impressed with the knowledge of music and dancing, the people of Pūmpukār exhibited, we are nonetheless pleased to find that actresses and dancing girls with curly hair woven with fragrant garlands, wearing jewelled chains and fine bangles of expert workmanship accompanied the expedition of Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ directed against the kings of North India.

Belief in God:

During the time of the epic, people worshipped many gods. There were daily services in the temples and there were periodical festivals too. We have a vivid description of the festival of Indrā in the 'Intira viḻavūreṭutta Kātai', in which, the people of Pukār took a major part. The exploits of Tirumāl (Māyōṉ) form the subject-matter of the dance-drama called 'Kuravai-k Kūttu' played by the women of 'Āyar' community. There are allusions to the Deities of Tiruvaraṅkam[54] and Tiruppati[55] in this epic. Iḷankō Aṭikāl feasts us with an equisite description of Tirumāl-Kuṉram also called Tirumāḷiruñcōlai and Aḻakar Koil.[56] Balaramā, the elder brother of Lord Krishnā, has also been worshipped.[57]

53. Cilap: 6: 76–108.
54. -do- 11: 35–40.
55. -do- 11: 41–51.
56. -do- 11: 136–139.
57. -do- 5: 171.

Murugan was the god of 'Kuriñci' people. In Cilappatikāram we find, that Murugan had assumed Purānic proportions and his worship had gathered various ritualistic details. 'Kunra-k-kuravai', rendered as a dance-drama by the maids of the hilly regions of the Cērā country, contains a mine of information on the story of Murugan. The puranic episodes relating to the conquest of Murugan over the evil forces of Surapadmā, the invincible king of the demons, find full expression in this dance-drama.

References to Sivā are not wanting in the epic. A graphic description of this Deity and His consort 'Korravai' is furnished in the songs of 'Veṭṭuva-vari' sung by the hunters. For the first time, we meet with a reference to the Dakshinamurthy, a form of Sivā in Cilappatikāram,[58] on which the Saṅgham literature is silent.

Cēran Ceṅkuṭṭuvan worshipped Siva, before he undertook his northward march. The worship of Siva appears to have been widely spread in Tamilakam in those days and this is borne out by ample reference to it in the epic.

Jainism and Buddhism claimed a large following in Tamilakam. Many Jaina and Buddhist Paḷḷis (temple) flourished in Pukār and Madurai.[59]

Worship of minor gods:

Many minor gods are mentioned in Cilappatikāram. Worship of Tirumāl and Siva had assumed importance. But gods like Indra, Muruga, Korravai, Aruka Deva and Buddha are revered throughout Tamilakam. The name of Vinayaka finds no mention in Cilappatikāram. The epic is equally silent on the worship of Varuna, the presiding deity of neytal region. Perhaps, the worship of Varuna had ceased even before Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ wrote his renowned classic. Cilappatikāram also makes an interesting mention of a sylvan goddess, a succubus, who haunted the country highways.[60]

58. Cilap: 23 : 91 and 24 : 13–14.
59. -do- 5 : 180 and 14 : 11.
60. -do- 11 : 109–127.

The Temples of Vañci :

The worship of Sivā and Tirumāl (Vishnu) by Cēran Ceṅkuṭṭuvan before he commenced his northward march has received a significant attention in the epic. The king received the lotus feet of Sivā on his crown, decorated with 'Vañci' blossoms. He received on his bejewelled shoulders, the garland offered to Tirumāl and brought to him by messengers as a symbol of the deity's blessings. Atiyārkkunallār, the reputed commentator, states, that this offering was from the Ananda-padmanabha swami temple at Tiruvanantapuram (Kerala State.)[61]

Religious tolerance :

The Saivite and Vaishnavite faiths as well as Jainism and Buddhism claimed equal honour, attention and adherence in ancient Tamilakam. The two latter religions were widely prevalent during the period of the epic. Kōvalan is depicted as a follower of Jainism.[62] Kavunti Aṭikaḷ a Jain saint had a great attachment for Kōvalan and Kaṇṇaki. But the religious predilections of the couple did not prevent them from seeking shelter with Mātari, belonging to a pronounced Vaishnava community.[63] They had also been listening patiently to the glorification of Tirumāl, by the Vaishnava Brahmin from Māṅkāṭu.[64] Cēran Ceṅkuṭṭuvan received with equal reverence the offerings received both from Sivā and Vishnu temples.[65] He was in a very cordial relationship with the celebrated Buddhist poet Cāttanār.[66] He was so large-hearted that he raised a temple to Kaṇṇaki, a Jain devotee, in his own country, undertaking for the purpose a costly military operation that took him to the countries of the insolent kings of Kanaga and Vijia in the far North.[67] The above episodes prove sufficiently, the extent of religious tolerance, practised by the Tamils of those days.

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61. Cliap : 26 : 62 Commentary.
62. -do- 16 : 18 'சாவக நோன்பிக ளடிக ளாதலின்'
63. -do- 15 : 1201-22.
64. -do- 11 : 35-53.
65. -do- 26 : 54-67.
66. -do- 25 : 64-68.
67. -do- 28 : 207-234.

3. LITERARY MERITS OF CILAPPATIKĀRAM

Of the five Kāppiyams or epics, said to have been extant in Tamil, three only have survived to this day. They are Cilappatikāram, Maṇimēkalai and Cīvakacintāmaṇi. The other two, Vaḷaiyāpati and Kuṇṭalakēci are not available in their complete form. Only a few verses in each of these works, have been salvaged and collected. Of all these Kāppiyams, Cilappatikāram holds the foremost place in the realm of Tamil literature. The modern poet Bharathiyar has paid a warm tribute to Cilappatikāram. He proclaims that among the poets of the world, he had known, there was none born greater than Kamban, Vaḷḷuvar and Ilaṅkō.[1] His description of Cilappatikāram, as an epic that touches our heart in 'thrilling fingers', has now become a household phrase, among the present day speakers and writers in Tamil.[2] In one of his poems entitled, 'Tamil community', he acclaims the literary virtues and excellence of the three famous compositions, Cilappatikāram, Tirukkuṟaḷ and Kambaramayanam.[3] All the Sangham works are but anthologies of short poems, each one of them independent and self-contained. The Sangham poets wrote these little gems of poems to give expressions to what they saw and felt. It is likely that a few long verses might have been attempted. But certainly none of them displayed any of the characteristics, required for an epic.

The distinction of creating an epic in Tamil around a story has fallen on Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ, one of the greatest poets of all times.

The narrative of the story has been divided into thirty 'Kātais' or cantos each constituting a single long poem complete in purpose and plan says Prof. T. P. Meenakshisundaram

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1. Bharathiyar Pāṭalkaḷ: Tamiḷ; 2.
2. -do- Centamiḷ Nādu: 7.
3. -do- Tamiḷ-c-cāti: 20–26.

Pillai': "Each 'Kātai' reads like a scintillating poem of the Sangham period. It is not apparent from a perusal of Pukār-k-kāṇṭam how the poet proposed to develop the plot. He belonged to an age when poets relished composing short independent poems. Perhaps, it was but natural, then that anyone attempting to write a long narrative poems should have performed none better. This fact is enough to establish that Cilappatikāram constitutes an important phase in the history of the growth of Tamil literature".[4]

Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ has drawn freely on Pattuppāṭṭu for many of the terms and phrases he has employed in Cilappatikāram. For example, some of the phrases fonnd in Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭi such as "Naṟumpukai eṭuttu"[5] 'Kuṟiñci pāṭi'[6] 'Uruva-p-pal-pū-t-tūy"[7] and 'Kōṭuvāy-Vaittu-k-koṭumaṇi iyakki'[8] may be found adorning the pages of Cilappatikāram too.[9] Similar instances can be multiplied. We may reasonably suppose that Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ might have read Pattuppāṭṭu, before he composed Cilappatikāram. Each of the idylls included in pattuppāṭṭu is an elongated varsion of poems contained in Puṟanāṉūṟu and Akanāṉūṟu collections. And an idyll of Pattuppāṭṭu is found to be similar to the 'Kātai' of Cilappatikāram.

It is usual to classify epics, as the epic of growth and the epic of art. We find that in most of the languages of the world the early epics fall under the first category. The Sanskrit classics, Valmiki's Ramayana and Vyasa's Maha Bharatha and the Greek classics, Odyssy and Iliad by Homer are epics of art. Myths and historical events combine together and evolve into epics of growth. This category of epic is called an 'Itihāsā' in Sanskrit. It is clear, that Cilappatikāram does not pertain to this class. But

4. Camaṉat-tamiḻ Ilakkiya Varalāṟu, p. 75.
5. Tirumuruku : 239
6. -do- 239.
7. -do- 241.
8. -do- 246.
9. -do- 24 : 17-18.

some scholars think to the contrary.[10] They rely on the allusion to one 'Tirumāvuṇṇi' contained in a verse by Marutam Iḷanākaṉṉaṉār[11] and another reference to Pēkaṉ and his wife Kaṇṇaki in Puṟanāṉūṟu verses[12] and have asserted that the great epic had been built upon these sources.

It is a well known fact, that the celebrated epics now extant in the various languages of the world have been woven around the nucleus of a significant myth or a legend or an historical event which had been told and retold by the people for a long time. But Cilappatikāram has been developed by Iḷaṅkō on a major plot, based on contemperaneous events. It is true, that Cilappatikāram does not answer to the description of an epic, under the Western Standards. In the literature of the West, the indispensible requirements for an epic has been, that its central plot should be built on the episodes of adventures in the life of a heroic personage and that it should cover the entire range of human experience. One fact, that Cilappatikāram falls short of this basic requirements, has, perhaps, prompted Prof. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai to deny it the exalted status and assign it to the lesser status of a romance.[13] However, the claims of this work for recognition as an epic, is founded not on the theme, but on the divine status achieved by a young woman under a tragic turn of certain events in her life and to the publicity and recognition won for her, by Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ and his imperial brother Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ.[14]

Next, we shall proceed to evaluate the claims of Cilappatikāram to be called a 'muttamiḷ-k-kāppiyam,' that, an epic that constitutes three types of literature, Iyal (prose and verse) Icai (musical compositions) and Nāṭakam (treatises relating to dance and drama). Aṭiyārkkunallār, the Commentator of Cilappatikāram,

10. Thiru Pinnathur Narayanasami Iyer's commentary.—' திருமாவுண்ணி யென்பது கண்ணகி கதையைக் குறிக்கின்றது போலும் '

11. Naṟ: 216.

12. Puṟa : 143–147.

13. A History of Tamil Literature p. 156.

14. Cilap: 30 : 155–164.

calls it a work rendered in faultless 'muttamiḻ.' The two sister epics, Maṇimēkalai and Cīvakacintāmaṇi do not enjoy a similar distinction.

As an 'Iyal-Tamil' work, the epic abounds in description of peoples, places and incidents.[15] As an 'Icai-t-tamiḻ' work, it includes songs composed specially for the purpose of being set to music and it contains a wealth of information on the art or music.[16] As a 'nāṭaka-t-tamiḻ' work, it includes songs to be sung to the accompaniment of folk-dances.[17] The 'kātais' of Cilappatikāram contains the elements of 'iyal-tamiḻ'. The sweet songs called, 'Kāṉal vari' (songs on the sandy-beach) are examples of 'Icai-t-tamiḻ.' The hunters' songs, the songs of the cowherd women, the songs of the hill-folk etc. embellishing the epic, are instances of 'nātaka-t-tamiḻ.'

Cilappatikāram is a story relating to common-folk. Kōvalaṉ and Kaṇṇaki, the hero and heroine of the story belonged to the merchant class. The three monarchs Karikāl Cōḻā, Pandiyan Neṭuñceḻiyaṉ and Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ have played their assigned parts in the epics; yet, they do not enjoy the distinction of playing the heroic roles. The traders, hunters, cowherds, hill-folk and similar humble ranks of society are the important actors figuring in this epic.

The main purpose, for which the epic was created by Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ, has been disclosed in the Patikam or the introductory piece. He wanted to proclaim the three great truths, that the God of Dharma will be transformed into the god of Death irrespective of the kings who swerve from the path of righteousness and justice, that great people will adore a sportless lady famed for her chastity, and that destiny will always manifest itself and be fulfilled. The first truth has been amply proved by the death

15. காதை எனப் பெயரிட்டுள்ளன அனைத்தும்—இயல்.

16. கானல் வரி, வாழ்த்துக்காதை—இசை.

17. வேட்டுவ வரி. ஆய்ச்சியர் குரவை, ஊர்சூழ் வரி, குன்றக்குரவை—கூத்து.

18. Patikam : 55-60.

of Pandiyan Neṭuñceḻiyaṉ immediately he found out his travesty of the royal Dharma. The second truth has been demonstrated by the life of Kaṇṇaki from the beginning to the end and by her ultimate deification and the third truth has been established by several factors and events in the epic, already noticed in this thesis, under the head 'Belief in fate.'

There was yet another motive for creation of this epic though it has not been explicitly stated by the author. Of the five major kappiyams in Tamil, Cilappatikāram alone pays equal attention to the various faiths and beliefs extant in those days. All the rest of them have a partiality towards a particular religion, and, in fact carries on a propaganda in its favour. Maṇimēkalai advocates Buddhism openly–Vaḷaiyāpati should have been written in support of either the Buddhist or Jain tenets. Kuṇṭalakēci is presumably a Jain epic. But in Cilappatikāram we meet with a Tamil society catholic in its religious attitudes and tolerant towards the followers of differing religious faiths. We are surprised to find the members of a common family professing different faiths and living amicably together. Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ has left us a faithful picture of all the aspects of the Tamil society of his times. The social life, the cultural pursuits and religious beliefs etc. have not escaped his keen attention. He has furnished us with the names of various gods, who were being worshipped by the people and the mode of their worship. Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ has left us a faithful picture of a model society wherein affluence in wealth, co-existence of different religious faiths and pursuit of fine-arts have had a happy co-existence which must excite the envy of the modern society. The mission of the author to spread a message of religious concord and amity and to issue, as it were, as implied warning to an erring posterity, has been amply fulfilled in his creation of this epic.[19]

Literary excellences of Cilappatikāram:

Cilappatikāram being an epic of art and not 'an epic of growth' its author Iḷaṅkō has bestowed special attention in

19. Cilap: 30 : 185–202.

avoiding usuage of stock phrases and worn out figures of speech in his descriptions of men and matters. The expressions, he uses to denote Kaṇṇaki exude an aura of delicacy, sweetness and divinity, with which he wanted to invest his heroine. It requires a cultural finish, deep insight into the turns of human psychology, a sympathetic appreciation of events and richness of expression to be the successful author of an epic. Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ lacks in none of these; and in fact, he excels in all of them. A number of instances in support of these observations may be quoted from the epic. A vision of the newly wedded Kōvalaṉ and Kaṇṇaki enjoying the pleasures of love on the terrace of their place, on a cool moon-light night arises before Iḷaṅkō.[20] They appear to him as a complete picture of a garland of fragrant flowers, in which neither the blossom nor the string running through them appear to exist each independently of the other. In another instance, Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ exhibits his refinement, aesthetic taste and courtly politeness when he says, that an offer of gold of a thousand and eight kaḷañcus was called for, as a price for the garland of Mātavi while the price was really for Mātavi, and not for her garland.[21]

The saintly author has not renounced his fascination for using quite a number of terms which have caught his imagination. The word 'Koḷkai' is one such.[22]

The richness and variety of expressions employed in the epic, leads us to wonder whether the words were waiting for his pleasure to secure the honour of a niche in his composition. The word-picture of Kaṇṇaki bursting with rage at the enormous injustice committed to Kōvalaṉ by Pandian Neṭuñceḷiyaṉ,[23] of Kaṇṇaki's anguished statement of her case before the king[24] and of her terrific curse over Madurai, cling to our mind indelibly.[25]

20. Cilap: 2: 9–83.

21. -do- 3: 164–166.

22. -do- 6: 173; 11: 163; 13: 14; 13: 56; 14: 15; 15: 219.

23. -do- 20: 34–43.

24. -do- 20: 48–67.

25. -do- 21: 39–46.

Iḷaṅkō employs in the epic, all the fine shades of similes permitted by Tolkāppiyaṉār with minor modification to suit the context. It is the genius of Iḷaṅkō as with Tennyson, to employ similes and metaphors that bear a homely relation to the context. Figures of speech are found employed profusely in the epic. Similes though of conventional pattern are occasionally altered a little and rendered more telling. It is usual for the poets to compare a woman's beauty to the colourful appearance of a peacock, her gait to the shy waddle of a swan and her lisp to the chatter of a parrot. But Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ would stretch the simile a little and fancifully state, that the peacock shamed by the loveliness of Kaṇṇaki retreated to a forest,[26] the swan humbled at her graceful gait dived into a pond[27] and the parrot jealous of her caressing lisps stuck on to her arm for learning the lisps from her.[28] This treatment of a figure of speech by Iḷaṅko reminds us of the 'long-tailed epic similes' of Homer. His adoration of the feminine gracefulness and virtues could not have found better expression than in his depiction of the River Cauvery,[29] the creep of the poignant evening,[30] the rippling pond and the ruddy glow of the rising sun.[31] He follows the traditional practices of the Sangham poets in representing things as he saw and felt, and scrupulously avoids excessive ornamentation. The faithful description of the shady groves and the luxurient forests, through which Kōvalaṉ and Kaṇṇaki passed on their way to Madurai breathes an air of freshness and reality.[32]

The art of letters subsists not only in putting into concrete shape the fancied animals and birds, trees and shrubs, rivers and riverlets but also bringing before our mental eyes their cries and

26. Cilap : 2 : 53–54.

27. -do- 2 : 55–56.

28. -do- 2 : 57–61.

29. -do- 7 : 25–27.

30. -do- 4 : 13–20.

31. -do- 10 : 1–3.

32. -do- 10 : 67–75.

chirps, songs and rustles, splashes and babbles.[33] Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ is surpassing in this art. He is able to extract music out of the names of flowers and trees.[34]

Paronomasia has not been found employed anywhere in the Sangham classics. But it is found in one or two places in Cilappatikāram.[35]

We find, that the Akaval verses, prefected in Cilappatikāram are rhythmic, facile and easy flowing.

Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ has made a valuable contribution to the development of Tamil literature by giving to it the priceless epic of the anklets.

33. Cilap : 10 : 104–119.

34. -do- 13 : 151–159.

35. -do- 13 : 50-51 : and 188.

MAṆIMĒKALAI

Maṇimēkalai and Cilappatikāram are some times called 'Twin-epics'. Maṇimēkalai may be said to continue, as it were, the unfinished story of Cilappatikāram. Maṇimēkalai, the daughter of Kovalaṉ and Mātavi is the heroine of this epic. One of the 'Kātais' (chapter) of the epic deals with Maṇimēkalai entering the city of Vañci. We have references to Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ and the city of Vañci in this 'Kātai.'

Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ :

The warriors of Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ's army donned garlands of 'Vañci' on their tufts. The army consisted of huge 'mountain-like' elephants, chariots and horses. The loud voice of the army, was like the roar of the seas. The king encamped on the banks of the Ganges with his army. He crossed the river with a kind of boat called 'Vaṅkam'. He fought against the chieftains, Kaṉakaṉ, Vijayaṉ, Uttaraṉ, Vicittiraṉ, and others and defeated them. He loaded their crowned heads with pieces of rock cut out from the Himalayas for carving out an image of Kaṇṇaki and marched them to his country triumphantly. He also brought with him 'Vākai' flower made of gold in memory of the splendid victory secured over the kings of the north.

Vañci :

Adjoining the city of Vañci, the capital of the Cērās, there were temples dedicated to gods, raised platforms, paved pathways, beautiful park-lands and tanks. Ascetics, sages well versed in the Vedic lore and great scholars graced the city. The beautiful city is named after a slender creeper called 'Vañci.'

The information about Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ and Vañci furnished by Maṇimēkalai,[1] supplements what we have already acquired from other sources of Tamil literature.

1. Maṇi: Vañci-maṉakar Pukka kātai: 62–94.

CHAPTER IV

OTHER WORKS

The culture and literature of the Tamils came into violent contact with those of the Kalabras, and the Pallavas in the early centuries of the Christian era and the Islamic and Christian traditions of the later ages. In this impact, several valuable works which have found mention in the commentaries on the Sangham classics, have been lost to the posterity. Takaṭūr yāttirai, and Muttoḷḷāyiram are two such valuable works which are not available to us in their entirety. But, with the little we have of them, we could guage and appreciate their literary and historical values. In this chapter, these two works are taken up for study. The other work included for discussion is Puṟapporuḷ-Veṇpāmālai, a treatise that prescribes severe codes of conduct during the various stages in the conduct of a war. The author of this reputed work belonged to the Cērā country.

1. TAKAṬŪR YĀTTIRAI

Takaṭūr-yāttirai is one of those Tamil classics lost to posterity owing to cataclysmic mishaps which overtook Tamilakam occasionally in the past, and to the impacts of alien cultures. We are grateful to the commentator of Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ for enshrining in his commentary the names of some of the rare Tamil works since lost. We come to know of the existence of Takaṭūr-yāttirai through Pērāciriyar[1] and Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar,[2] the famous commentators of Tolkāppiyam and the commentator of Takkayāka-p-paraṇi[3] as well as through Puṟat-tiraṭṭu.

Forty-four verses, claimed to belong to Takaṭūr-yāttirai, are included in Puṟa-t-tiraṭṭu. We have to presume that, even when Puṟat-tiraṭṭu was compiled, only forty-four verses had been available, and the rest could not be traced. However, the commentator of Takkayāka-p-paraṇi was fortunate to secure and include, among his reference, a single verse supposed to belong to Takaṭūr-yāttirai, which was not available to the compiler of Puṟa-t-tiraṭṭu.

Takaṭūr-yāttirai is a commemmorative treatise in poetry, on a decisive war which took place at a place called, Takaṭūr, now identified with 'Atamaṉ Kōṭṭai'[4] between Atikamāṉ Neṭumāṉ Añci, the chief of Takaṭūr and the Cērā king Peruñ-Cēral Irumpoṟai. The Cērā monarch won a glorious victory in this battle. The tenth decad of Patiṟṟuppattu composed by Aricil-kiḻār relates to him. Because of his signal success in the Takaṭūr war, the Cērā king came to be called 'Takaṭūr eṟinta-Peruñ-Cēral Irumpoṟai' that is, Peruñcēral Irumpoṟai who destroyed Takaṭūr.

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1. Tol : Poruḷ : Ceyyuḷiyal : 171 commentary.
2. Tol : Poruḷ : „ 235 and
   Tol : Poruḷ : Puṟattiṇai iyal : 17 commentary.
3. Takkayāka-p-Paraṇi : Pēykaḷai-p-pāṭiyatu : Tāḻicai : 12 commentary.
4. Dr. R. P. Sethu Pillai, Ūrum Pērum : pp. 89–90.

2. MUTTOḶḶĀYIRAM

This interesting literary piece is said to have orginally comprised of two thousand and seven-hundred verses. But, only one hundred and eight of them have been collected and included in an anthology called 'Puṟa-t-tiraṭṭu', a work of the 15th century.[1] One verse which appers to belong to Muttoḷḷāyiram, but which does not find place in the Pura-t-tiraṭṭu is referred to by Iḷampūraṇar in his commentary on Tolkāppiyam. It commences with the term "Ēṟṟurtiyāṉum". The earlier commentator of Tamil classics have quoted from Muttoḷḷāyiram extensively in their commentaries. But none of them has referred to this work as having consisted of two thousand and seven hundred verses. Thiru T. K. Chidambaranatha Mudaliar, who has edited Muttoḷḷāyiram, asserts that, the work contained nine hundred verses on each of the three Tamil kings, making on the whole two thousand and seven-hundred verses.[2] But his claim is exaggerated and not supported by sufficient proof. It is safe not to admit that has not been proved beyond doubt.

We find that, apart from Muttoḷḷāyiram, there have existed in Tamil works bearing the title 'Toḷḷāyiram', 'Vaccai-t-toḷḷāyiram' and 'Arumpai-t-toḷḷāyiram' may be quoted as instances. These have been referred to, in the commentary on Ilakkaṇa-viḷakka-p-pāṭṭiyal', a treatise on Tamil grammar, as examples of works which have not exceeded the maximum number of one thousand verses, the upper limit set for such works under the principles of grammar.[3] From this, it is evident, that Muttoḷḷāyiram could not have comprised of more than nine-hundred verses at any time. Prof. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai is emphatic in his view that only nine hundred verses were written on all the three kings, the Cērā, the Cōḷā and the Pāṇḍiyā, and not more.[4]

1. Prof. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, Puṟa-t-tiraṭṭu, Introduction p. XXXVII.

2. Kalai-k-Kaḷañciyam: Vol. VIII; p. 412.

3. I. V. Paṭṭiyal: 88.

4. Ilakkiya tīpam: p. 179.

We learn from the seventh verse of Takaṭūr-yāttirai, that the warring kings were related to as brothers. Naccinārkkiniyar informs us, that Atikamāṉ Neṭumāṉ Añci held on within his fort till the Cērā king was actually at the ramparts. Besides the two principal combatants, the Cōḷā and the Pāṇdiyā monarchs, Eḷini, the brother of Neṭumāṉ Añci and Malaiyamāṉ Tirumuṭi-k-kāri, the chief of Tirukkōvalūr also took sides in the battle.

Takaṭūr-yāttirai includes poems[5] by Aricil-kiḻār as well as Poṉmuṭiyār. By the way, these two poets have treated the events of the war in this work, we have to infer, that they were contemporaries of the kings and chiefs who took part in the war. But Prof. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai would assign a later date to the work.[6] It is the usual practice in the cultural histories of the peoples of the world to sing or write on the glories of the important and crucial wars when the events were actually occurring, or had just happened. No lasting or fitting memorial, literary or otherwise could be created years after the thrills, the passion and the objective of the war had long faded out from the memories of people. Therefore, it is a contrary to the principles of human psychology to assign such work as Takaṭūr yāttirai to a later date. This view has the support of Mayilai Seeni Venkataswami, a scholar of repute.[7]

Takaṭūr-yāttirai appears to have been extant in palm-leaf manuscript till as late as the nineteenth century, according to Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Aiyar, when it joined the ranks of missing classics.[8]

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5. Stanzas : 9, 29, 47, 48.
6. Puṟa-t-tiraṭṭu : Nūṉ-mukam, p. XIV.
7. Maṟaintu-pōṉa-Tamiḻ Nūlkaḷ : pp. 161-162.
8. Eṉ-Carittiram : pp. 876-877.

The verses of Muttoḷḷāyiram are composed in Veṇpā metre. Within a short compass of a Veṇpā, the poet entertains us with a fascinating stage show which, according to Thiru T. K. Chidambaranatha Mudaliar, clings to our memory. We derive from the work, a mass of information on kings and people relating to acts of generosity, deeds of valour and the intricacies of love.[5]

The Author:

It is unfortunate, that it has not been possible to find out any clue to the authorship of this celebrated composition. However, we may assume, that the author was a devotee of Sivā from his pious references to Sivā or Murugan in the verses commencing with the term 'Maṉṉiya nāṇmīṉ'[6] 'Maṭaṅkā Mayilūrti'[7] and 'Ceṅkaṇ Neṭiyāṉmēl'[8]

The period of Muttoḷḷāyiram :

Pērāciriyar, one of the commentators of Tolkāppiyam, has made a reference to Muttoḷḷāyiram in his commentry.[9] Pērāciriyar lived in the 14th century A.D. Iḷampūraṇar, another commentator of this work of grammar has quoted the verse "Ēṟṟūrtiyāṉum" and has remarked, that the source of the quotation is Muttoḷḷāyiram.[10] Again, Pērāciriyar states, that Muttoḷḷāyiram, the 'Antāti' poems of Poykaiyār aad others and Kalambakams are prototypes of 'Viruntu verses' which deal with the new ideas in a new way.[11] It is now established that 'Antātis' and 'Kalampakams' appeared for the first time in the 8th and 9th centuries. We are led to a logical conclusion, therefore, that Muttoḷḷāyiram should have also come into existence about the same period. Our attention is again drawn by Pērāciriyar to the fact that "the authors of the Patiṉeṇ-kīḻ-k-kaṇakku works and Muttoḷḷāyiram,

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5. Kalai-k-Kaḷañciyam: Vol. VIII; p. 412.
6. P. Tiraṭṭu: 1.
7. -do- 1464.
8. -do- 1465.
9. Tol: Poruḷ: 239 commentary.
10. -do- 5 -do-
11. -do- 229 -do-

who were of later periods, had not exceeded the prescribed line limits in their composition".[12]

As the authour of Muttoḷḷāyiram has been considered as a later author by Pērāciriyar, we may safely assume that this work relates to the post Sangham period.

Leaving aside these external evidences, we have internal proofs, which point to the fact, that this composition relates to a post Sangham period. While there are a number of references in it to Uṟaiyūr, as the capital of Cōḷās, there is not a single reference to Tañcāvūr having held that exalted position.

It is tantalising to find that the Cērās, the Coḷā and the Pāṇḍiyā monarchs have been indicated in the work by the appellations common to each of the dynasties and not by their individual names. For example, the Cērā is called 'Cēraṉ', 'Vāṉavaṉ', 'Kōkkōtai', 'Māntai-k-kōṉ', and 'Muciṟiyāṟ Kōmān'. It has not been possible, therefore, to identify the monarchs who flourished during the Muttoḷḷāyiram period. Puṟanāṉūṟu calls both Cōḷā and the Cērā kings by the appellations 'Kōkkōtai' and 'Nalaṅkiḷḷi' without distinction. It is a matter for further research, whether the kings referred to in Puṟanāṉūṟu were the contemporaries of the author of Muttoḷḷāyiram.[13]

The Tamil Nikanṭu (Thesaurus) called 'Tivakaram' lists the names 'Kaṉavaṭṭam', 'Pāṭalam' and 'Kōram' as belonging to the royal horses of the Pāṇḍiyā, the Cērā and the Cōḷā kings respectively. Tivākaram was a compilation of the 10th century. Hence, Muttoḷḷāyiram has to be ascribed to a period prior to the 10th century. From the foregoing discussion, we are faced with the inescapable conclusion, that the work should have been composed during the period that intervened between the closing days of the Sangham era (250 A.D.) and the beginning of the reign of Vijalaya Cōḷa (9th century A.D.).[14]

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12. Tol. Poruḷ: Ceyyuḷiyal: 158.
13. Thiru N. Sethu Raghunathan: Muttoḷḷayiram Edition, Introduction p. 11.
14. Prof. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, Ilakkiya tipam, pp. 183–188.

The natural resources and affluence of Cērā country:

The Cērā country was a land, gifted with an inexhaustible resource of water for irrigation. The author of Muttoḷḷāyiram grows eloquent over the flooded tanks and streams, the cries of the birds, the 'Puṉṉai' (Calophyllum inophyllum) gardens, the dense groves of coconut palms and the sweet smell of the 'Puṉṉai' blossoms filling the air with fragrance—all of which characterised the Cērā Nādu.[15] In one of the verses, we are feasted with a description of 'Vañci', the capital of the Cērās, where the merry-making drunkards split so much toddy that the streets turned slushy by the feet of the passing elephants.[16]

The appellations of the Cērā king:

In Muttoḷḷāyiram, the Cērā kings have been variously mentioned as 'Kolliyar Kōṉ Kōtai'[17] 'Cēralar Kok-kōtai',[18] 'Vaṉavaṉ',[19] 'Ceṅkaṇmā-k-kōtai',[20] 'Muciṟiyar Kōṉ',[21] 'Māntai-k-kō',[22] 'Kuṭanāṭaṉ',[23] 'Vañci-k-kōmāṉ',[24] 'Māk-kaṭuṅkō',[25] 'Kōtai',[26] and 'Pūḻiyarkō'.[27]

The Cērā monarch wore flower garlands around his head,[28] bright golden jewellery[29] and flower garlands[30] on his broad chest, as well as shoulder rings and diamond-set wristlets.[31]

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15. P. Tiraṭṭu : 1547.
16. -do- 862.
17. -do- 1467.
18. -do- 829, 1567.
19. -do- 1285.
20. -do- 1388.
21. -do- 1279.
22. -do- 1517.
23. -do- 1564.
24. -do- 1564.
25. -do- 1570.
26. -do- 1278, 1279, 1467, 1471, 1508, 1541, 1553, 1554 and 1568.
27. -do- 1532.
28. -do- 1508.
29. -do- 1431.
30. -do- 1279.
31. -do- 1431.

The Valiant Elephants:

Cērā country was proud of a large herds of elephants. The Royal elephants have been described, as possessing pretty little eyes,[32] and reputed to be invincible in war[33] and gifted with an instinctive urge to seize and destroy the state umbrellas of the enemy kings.[34]

The war chariots were drawn by horses.[35]

Towns:

The Cērā country was proud of possessing famous towns like Vañci, surrounded by flower gardens,[36] Muciṟi noted for ites endless groves of tall coconut palms,[37] and Māntai with inexhaustible sources of irrigation.[38]

Figures of speech:

There are twenty verses in Muttoḷḷāiyram devoted to panegyrics on the Cērā monarchs.

As for the figures of speech under usage, we find, simile is employed in five of the verses.[39] The warriors of the Cērā army are compared to the innumerable stars twinkling in the heavens, and the mighty king is likened to the splendorous moon sailing amidst them.[40]

Red water-lilies in full blossom waving on the ponds, look as though the pond is on fire, and they are the flames leaping from it.[41]

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32. P. Tiraṭṭu 1278.
33. -do- 1532.
34. -do- 1388.
35. -do- 1508.
36. -do- 862.
37. -do- 1279.
38. -do- 1547 and 1570.
39. -do- 829, 1467. 1532, 1553 and 1541.
40. -do- 1467.
41. -do- 829.

The graciousness of the people of the place where the lady-love lived is compared to cool water and shade.[42]

One of the similes used, is very significant and brings out an important moral lesson. A young maid went to the threshold of her house to have a lusty look at the fascinating appearance of the Cērā king who was passing in a glorious procession just then. But being naturally bashful, she hesitated to open the door and turned back with diśappointment. The anguish of this maiden is compared to the wretchedness felt by an indigent person approaching a richman for succour but turning back stung by a feeling of self respect.[43]

In another verse, the vast army of the Cērā king, is metaphorically described as an ocean.[44]

The heroic life of the people:

Muttoḷḷāyiram pays a very high tribute to the prowess and valour of the Cērā warriors. The commander of the Cērā army is reported to have warned the kings who raided Cērā country to turn back to their own countries as their reliance on the war elephants was futile. They were also advised by him to paint on the ramparts of their fortresses, the figure of a bow, the state emblem of the Cērā kings. The Cērās were sure to pursue the raids to their own countries, but would return without investing their fortresses, when they found the painted emblem on the ramparts. We find in this characterisation, that the Cēra warriors were not only valiant and daring, but were chivalrous too towards the vanquished foes.[45]

The lance of the monarch, that had seen much fighting, stink with an encrustation of enemies' flesh while retaining its usual fragrance of sandal. Its valour was celebrated with feasting and

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42. P. Tiraṭṭu 1532.
43. -do- 1553.
44. -do- 1541.
45. -do- 1285.

festivities. The perfume attracted the bees, and the fetidness lured foxes.[46]

The Cērā army put the enemy territories to sword and fire.[47] The land was laid waste[48] and, in course of time sank under an over growth of 'Pēy-c-curai' creepers (Cucumis trigonus) and 'taivēḷai' shrubs (Gynandropsis panta phylla).[49]

Poetic treatment of love:

Twelve of the verses in Muttoḷḷāyiram relate to the 'Kaikkiḷai' (unreciprocated) form of love.[50] Pērāciriyar remarks in his Tolkāppiyam commentary, that there are a number of 'Kaikkiḷai' verses on one-sided or unreciprocated love in Muttoḷḷāyiram. Most of these verses fall under the 'classification of 'Puṟa-p-puṟa-k-kaikkiḷai' of 'Pāṭāṉ' tiṇai (absolutely external theme praising a hero's fame, power, munificence etc.). The author reveals in an interelacing of various affections of unreciprocated love, which consumes the young maidens, who had beheld the splendrous Cērā monarch and fallen in love with him forthwith. He touches on them from odd angles and lays-emphasise on the physical charms, valour and might of the Cērā king.

Muttoḷḷāyiram provides us, with sufficient material for an evaluation of the social life of the people under the Cērā rulers.

46. P. Tiraṭṭu: 1471.
47. -do- 1431.
48. -do- 1278.
49. -do- 1279.
50. -do- 1508, 1517, 1518, 1532, 1541, 1547, 1553, 1557, 1564, 1568 and 1570.

3. PURAPPORUL VEṆPĀMĀLAI

Man plays a dual role in his life. He finds a mate for himself, raises a family and enjoys the pleasures of home. At the same time, he maintains his contact with the world around him. He must earn to maintain his family; he has a duty to perform towards his king and country. The ancient Tamils had recognised this inescapable philosophical truth and evolved a set of general principles and rules of conduct to govern the course of their lives. While the pleasures and pangs of conjugal love are classified as 'Akam' or love-themes, human conduct in relation to the external world is dealt with as a 'Puṛam' topic.

Puṛapporuḷ Veṇpāmālai is a poetical treatise on the 'Puṛam' topic. It deals with certain general principles governing the conduct of war, the morale of the warriors who take part in battles and heroism of the king in whom the success or defeat in a war rested, and, as such, it is grammar of human conduct.

The text is arranged in this order: first 'cūttiram' that prescribed common rules of conduct are placed; then verses in Veṇpāmetres which explain and illustrate the sutrās, and lastly, the gist of each of the Veṇpās. The Veṇpās that elucidate the rules on Kaikkiḷai, that is the unresponded love, are all in Maruṭpā metres.

The authorship of this treatise is attributed to Aiyaṉāritaṉār, a scion of the Cērā line. The original work followed in Puṛapporuḷ Veṇpāmālai is Paṉṉiru paṭalam supposed to have been composed by the twelve disciples of Akattiyar. Pērāciriyar, in his commentary on Tolkāppiyam[1] quotes Aiyaṉāritaṉār "who composed Veṇpāmālai following this original work, Paṉṉiru paṭalam."

1. Tol: Poruḷ: marapiyal: 94 commentary.
'பன்னிருபடல முந்நூலாக வழிநூல் செய்த வெண்பாமாலை
ஐயனாரிதனாரும் இது கூறினார்.'

The name Aiyaṉāritaṉār suggests that the author belonged to Cērā country. Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Aiyar observes that Aiyaṉāritaṉār is another name for 'Sasta,' the presiding deity of Kurañcēri adjoining Tiruviṭaikkaḷi; and that in many places, this identity of names occurs.[2]

The author of Puṟapporuḷ Veṇpāmālai appears to have been a dispassionate person: He extols the virtues of both the Cērā and the Cōḷā monarchs, and, though himself a saivite, glorifies Vishnu.[3] Many of the Veṇpās and some of the gists following the Veṇpās have been quoted as authority by the commentators Iḷampūraṇar, Parimēlaḷakar, Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar and Aṭiyārkkunallār and the earlier commentator of Puṟanāṉūṟu in their commentaries. The commentator of Ilakkaṇa Viḷakkam, a later work on Tamil grammar, has been profuse in his reference to Puṟapporuḷ Veṇpāmālai.

Puṟapporuḷ Veṇpāmālai and Tolkāppiyam:

There are a number of places where Puṟapporuḷ Veṇpāmālai differs from Tolkāppiyam in the treatment of 'Puṟam' topic. Tolkāppiyam classifies Puṟam, that is, the theme relating to the conduct as regards war, state craft, administration etc., into seven kinds, viz. veṭci, vañci, kāñci, uḷiñai, tumpai, vākai, and pāṭāṇ. But we find that in Puṟaporuḷ Veṇpāmālai, Puṟam is classified into twelve kinds viz. veṭci, vañai, kāñci, uḷiñai, tumpai, vākai, pāṭāṇ, karantai, nocci, potuviyal, kaikkiḷai and peruntiṇai. Tolkāppiyaṉār includes 'Karantai' in veṭci, but admits 'karantai' is of a separate kind.[8] He and Aiyaṉāritaṉār both agree on the implications of 'vañci.' But they differ on the connotation of 'kāñci.' Whereas the reputed author of Tolkāppiyam interprets 'kāñci' as bearing on the ephemeral nature of world, the author of Puṟapporuḷ Veṇpāmālai would explain it as the defensive position assumed by a king when an enemy, donning the 'vañci' garland, raids his country. Though there is an accord between these two grammarians on the

2. P. V. malai; mukavural: p. V and VI foot-rote.
3. Tol: Poruḷ: Puṟattiṇai iyal: 5.

implication of 'tumpai,' Aiyaṉāritaṉār would present 'tumpai' in twelve subdivisions.

Aiyaṉāritaṉār has differed from Tolkāppiyaṉār in certain conceptions, but he has broadly followed the Paṉṉiru pāṭṭiyal composed by the twelve disciples of Akattiyar.[4] Pērāciriyar follows suit.[5]

The period of Puṟapporuḷ-Veṇpāmālai:

As has been observed already, many of the 'veṇpās' and some of the gists have been quoted as references by Iḷampūraṇar, Pērā-ciriyar, and Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar, Aṭiyārkkunallār and Parimēlaḻakar. It is therefore evident, that Aiyaṉāritaṉār flourished prior to these commentators. A quotation from Puṟapporuḷ Veṇpāmālai appears in the commentary on Yāpparuṅkala-Virutti. The author of this commentary has been assigned to 10th century A.D.[6] Hence we may safely conclude, that Aiyaṉāritaṉār should have lived even earlier to this period.

Literary charms of Puṟapporuḷ Veṇpāmālai:

Though it is purely a treatise on grammar, Puṟapporuḷ veṇpā-mālai excels in literary embellishments. In the veṇpā amplifying the rule called 'Koṟṟavaḷḷai' which points out the conditions of a country before and after it was overrun by the enemy, the author paints a tearful word-picture. He wails over a country which had once resounded with the happy noise of children playing at cart pulling and has now met with utter destruction.[7] The genius of the author lies, in picking up the voice of the children among various jubilations to bring home to us, the grave effects of the tragedy.

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4. P. V. mālai : Ciṟappu-p-pāyiram.
5. Tol : Poruḷ : marapiyal : 94 commentary.
6. Sōma Iḷavaracu, Ilakkaṇa Varalāṟu, p. 87.
7. P. V. mālai : Vañci-p-paṭalam : 8.

References to the Cērās, Cōḷās and Pāṇḍiyās:

The palmyra flower garland of the Cērā kings and the Kolli hills which belonged to him are acclaimed.[8] We are also informed that the Cōḷās donned garlands of 'Ātti' flowers[9] and the Pandiyās wore 'Vēmpu' garlands.[10]

The Veṇpās disclose a fund of information on the modes of warfare practised by the ancient Tamils, their social habits and customs and the deities Koṟṟavai, Murugan, Tirumāl and Sivā worshipped by them.

The poems of Puṟapporuḷ-Veṇpāmālai are well-knit compositions, compact with ideas, surfeit with poetic charms, and well balanced in cadence and harmony. They are distinctive and thought-provoking.

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8. -do- Potuviyaṟ paṭalam : 1.
9. -do- -do- : 2.
10. -do- -do- : 3.

CHAPTER V

DEVOTIONAL LITERATURE

Even as nature has had an intimate influence over the lives of the ancient Tamils, gods too have had an inseperable association with them. God was a necessary requirement and a characteristic of the land, on which the Tamils lived. There is no evidence forthcoming whether there had existed any such thing as a religion. There were gods; but religion with the connotation, as we know of, had not made its appearance as yet. The gods worshipped by the ancient Tamils guided them in their conduct for a better, nobler and fuller enjoyment of life. They were not demanding; nor did they promise anything. There are of course, the instances of Brahmin poets performing sacrifice under the patronage of Cērā monarchs. These episodes are but indications that the Vedic cult had made its infiltration into the culture of the Tamils already. But it had not shapped itself into a separate faith with a separate system of philosophy.

Jainism and Buddhism entered the Tamil country with a mission of love, sacrifice and non-violence and caught the imagination of the people, like wild fire. The people welcomed these faiths ardently and changed them sufficiently to suit their genius. Literature on theological polemics multiplied. Sankaracarya, a native of the Cērā country stalked the length and breadth of the land like a colossus, and fought and won single handed many decisive wordy battles with the theologians of Jainism and Buddhism.

A religious revivalism appeared in Tamil Nadu, which proved more than a match to these new faiths. The movement gathered momentum under the Saiva Nayanmārs and Vaishnava Āḻvārs. The Jains and Buddhists found refuge in their skill in hair-splitting logic to maintain their respective beliefs. But the Saiva and the Vaishnava saints forged an effective weapon in the form

of the Bhakti cult, and wielded it most effectively against their adversaries. They sang sweet, soul-stirring songs and hymns and set them to pleasing music. With the outpouring of their hearts, they touched the souls of people and lifted them to the highest heaven of ineffable vision. These saints led a life of simplicity, sacrifice and unceassing devotion to God. They lived with the people and for the people. New and vigorous systems of philosophy took shape. God, soul and World were distinguished as separate identities and assigned separate places in the cosmic scheme of things.

Of the Saiva saints and the Vaishnava Āḷvārs, who took a leading part in orientating the devotional cult Kulacēkara Āḷvār, Saint Cuntaramūrtti Nāyaṉār, Cēramāṉ Perumāḷ Nāyaṉār and Vēṇaṭṭaṭikaḷ have been taken up here for an appraisal of their contribution of Tamil literature as each one of them has had a significant connection with the Cēra country.

VAISHNAVITE LITERATURE

PERUMĀḶ TIRUMOḺI

Among the ancient religions that existed in Tamil country two deserve special mention—Saivism and Vaishnavism. They paved the way to attain godhood in one's birth. Let us deal about Vaishnavism briefly in the following pages.

The term 'Vishnu' denotes His omnipresence. He is spoken of in the four Vedas as the supreme deity and one of the Trinity. He takes birth in this world to uplift mankind by eradicating evil and by establishing righteousness. The Bhagavad Gita Sloga, "Parithranaya Sadhunam Vinachayacha Dushkritham, Dharma Samsthapanarthaya Sambavami Yuge Yuge"[1] States the reason for these incarnations. Patanjali, the commentator of Panini's grammar makes mention of Tirumāl or Vishnu as a 'paradevatha' or supreme deity. In an inscription at Kosandi, in North India, about 200 B.C. mention is made of construction of a temple for Vasudeva and of worshipping him. Dr. R. G. Bandarkar refers to this.[2]

Vaishnavam in Tamil Literature—References:

Tolkāppiyam, the earliest extent Tamil Grammar, divides the landscape into four kinds as 'Kuṟiñci' (The Mountainous-region), 'mullai' (The forest region), 'marutam' (The fertile plains), and 'neytal' (The maritime coast). It refers also to the respective deities, presiding over these regions. The 'cūttiram' beginning with 'Māyōṉ Mēya Kāṭuṟai Ulakamum' speaks about this fact.[3] From this cūttiram, we find that 'Māyōṉ' or Vishnu is the presiding Deity of 'mullai'. The 'puṟatiṇai-t-tuṟai' by name

1. Sri Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 4; Sloka: 8.
2. Cuarterly Journal of the Mystic Society, Bangalore Vol: XI p. 87.
3. Tol: Poruḷ: Akattiṇai iyal: 5.

'pūvainilai'[4] says, that the complexion of Vishnu is dark-blue, like the 'Kāyā-flower' (Memecylon edule).

The Puranāṉūṟu, one of the eight anthologies, refers to Krishna and Balarama, who are incarnations of Vishnu. Balarama is mentioned as of white colour with the palm-tree as the emblem on his flag, whereas Krishna is referred to as of black colour with garuda, or the kite-bird as the emblem on his flag[5] Mention is made in the Akanāṉūṟu of Lord Sri Ramachandra meeting in council under a Banyan tree with the 'Vanara' army sorrounding him to discuss about the expedition to Lanka.[6] In Puranāṉūṟu, reference is made to the ornaments of Sita, as being found by the monkeys at Kishkinda.[7] six stanzes are devoted to Lord Vishnu and He is spoken of as an 'Antharyamin'.[8] The Pattu-p-paṭṭu anthology (Ten-Tens) contain references to Vishnu. The Perumpāṉāṟṟuppaṭai, makes mention of the reclining pose of the Lord on the serpent at 'Tiruvekka' in Kāñci.[9] The Mullai-p-pāṭṭu refers to the disc (Chakra) and the Conch (Caṅku).[10] The Madurai-k-kāñci says, that Vishnu has taken his birth in the star 'Tiruvōṇam'.[11] Even in Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai which eulogises Muruga, there is a reference to the garuda flag of Tirumāl.[12]

In the famous 'Tirukkuṟaḷ', there are two couplets which refer to this God Vishnu as one, who measured the three worlds with His feet[13] and as one, who is Lotus-eyed.[14]

4. Tol: Poruḷ: Puṟattiṇai iyal: 60.
5. Pura: 56: 3–6.
6. Aka: 70: 13–16.
7. Pura: 378: 18–27.
8. Pari: 3: 63–68.
9. Perumpāṇ: 371–374.
10. Mullaip: 1–3.
11. Maduraik: 590–591.
12. Tirumuruku: 151 and 160–161.
13. Kuraḷ: 610.
14. -do- 1103.

In Cilappatikāram, the Brahmin of Māṅgādu village in the Cērā nādu says to Kōvalaṉ, that he has started from his village, to have 'Dharsan' of the Lord Vishnu, at Srirangam, where He is in the reclining pose,[15] and of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumalai Hills, where He is in the standing pose.[16] Further, in the 'Āycciyar—Kuravai', the worship of Tirumāl and his incarnations as Rama and Krishna, have been eulogised in a marvellous way.[17]

The Maṇimēkalai, a Buddhist Kavya refers to the puranas about Lord Narayana: for example, the Vishnu purana.[18]

From the literary references, in various works cited above, we can easily determine the antiquity of the Vaishnavite religion.

The term Āḻvār:

The word 'Āḻvār' means those devotees, who dive deep in devotion to the Lord Vishnu in Vaishnavite parlance. The word 'Acharya' similarly denotes the pedigree of eminent preceptors, who preached and propagated the Sri Vaishnava 'Dharsana' or the Vaishnavite cult, expounding the Sanskrit Vedas and the Tamil Divya Prabandams: (i.e.—divine utterances of the Dravidian Saints). Of these Acharyas, the foremost and the fountain-head is known as Sriman 'Nadhamunigal'.

Kulacēkara Āḻvār:

He is one of the twelve Āḻvārs. He is a Cērā ruler and hence a Kshatriya, by birth.[19] His capital city is known as 'Kōḻi'[20] and his country as 'Koṅgu Nādu'.[21] He is said to have conquered and attained suzerainty over the Cōlā and Pāṇdiyā Kingdom also, as evidenced from his own utterances, styling himself as 'Kūṭal Nāyakaṉ'[22] (Lord of Madurai) and 'Kōḻiyar Kōṉ' (Lord of Uṟaiyur, capital of Cōḻa country).[23]

15. Cilap: 10 : 35-40.
16. -do- 10 : 41-51.
17. -do- 17 : 32-37.
18. Maṇi : 27 : 98-99.
19. P. Tirumoḻi : VIII : 3.
20. -do- III : 9.
21. -do- VI : 10 : IX : 10.
22. -do- 1 : 1 & II : 10.
23. -do- IX,: 11 and X ; 11.

Regarding the date of Kulacēkarapperumāḷ, the Divya Suri Charitā says, that he is contemporary of Tirumaṅkai Āḷvār and Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi Āḷvār. But researches show, that Kulacēkarā might have lived anterior to Tirumaṅkai Āḷvār by a few decades. Further, there is a version that the Cērā king, Cēramāṉperumāḷ Nāyaṉār, a saivite, has been preceded by a king who later became a recluse, retiring to the forest to do penance.[24] Some identify this 'Tapasvin' king, as Kulacēkarā.[25] The erudite scholar Mahavidwan M. Raghava Iyengar fixes the date of Kulacēkarā as the beginning of the 8th century.[26] No doubt, there are phrases in his own Tirumoḷi (or divine composition) which bear authentic testimony to his detachment from worldly pleasures.[27] Further, he was imbued with the deep passion to mix with the Devotees of Srirangam, and he passionately prayed to have 'Dharsan' of the Lord of Srirangam.[28] Daily he used to think about starting to Srirangam from his capital city, and this is evidenced in his 'Mukunda mālai' a Sanskrit composition written by him. Some scholars are of the opinion, that Mukunda mālai was not written by him.[29]

But, there is a very fine evidence that can be given regarding the date of the Āḷvār, and that is an inscription of the 9th century A.D., wherein it is stated that his second 'Tirumoḷi' beginning with the line, 'Tēṭṭaruntiṟaḷ Tēṉiṉai' is to be sung in the temple by the 'Arayar' or the temple minstrels. Further two inscriptions of the Cōḷā-kings, Kulōttuṅgā I (1070-1122) and Kulōttuṅgā II (15th year of his reign) also refer to this same 'Tirumoḷi' as being sung before Lord Ranganatha, when he took

24. P. Purāṇam, Cēramāṉ Perumāḷ Nāyaṉār Purāṇam : 10.
25. Thiru M. Raghava Ayyangar, Āḷvārkaḷ Kāla nilai: p. 161.
26. -do- p. 164.
27. P. Tirumoḷi : III : 1 : IX: 5 and IV : 7.
28. -do- I : 10.
29. The famous Vaishnavite scholar Prativāti Bayaṅkaram P. B. Annangarachariyar Swami is of this view.

Prof. V.R.R. Dikshitar is of the opinion that Mukundamalai was written by Kulacekarar. (Studies in Tamil literature p. 108.)

his temporary abode beneath the 'punnai tree' (calophyllum Inophyllum) in the temple premises.[30] Prof. T. P. Meenakshisundaram Pillai is of the opinion, that Kulacēkarar lived in the latter part of the eighth century.[31] Anyhow, we can come to the conclusion, that he flourished in the 8th century A.D.

Kulacēkarā's birth place has been mentioned as 'Kōḻi-k-kōṭu' in the Divya Suri Caritā, 'Kollinagar' in the Guruparamparai of Piṉpaḷakiya perumāḷ Jeeyar, and as 'Vañcikkaḷam' in Desikap-prabhandham of Vedanta Desikar.

The Surname 'Perumāḷ':

The Kerolotpatthi, which is historical document of Kerala refers to these kings as 'perumāḷkaḷ' and they will be selected to rule over the country every twelve years. It catalogues about 25 such 'Perumāḷkaḷ' of whom this Kulacēkarā is one. But William logan opines, that looking for the historical facts into these works is like searching for a needle in a haystack. Hence in his opinion, these works are nothing more than fables.[32]

The episode of Kulacēkara renouncing his kingship:

The ministers of the royal household thought that because of his deep devotion towards the Bhaktas or Devotees, Kulacēkarā was not able to devote himself full-time to his regnal duties. Hence, they decided on a plan to create in the king, a sort of a hatred towards the Bhaktas; and to achieve this end, they themselves have stolen a beautiful necklace set with precious gems for the Lord to adorn, and threw the blame on the devotees. But the Āḷvār never believed their words for he was confident that the devotees of the Lord would not stoop to pilfering their Lord's Ornament; and justified his conviction by thrusting his hand in a pot wherein a cobra was already put. The idea, is that if the cobra bites and harms him, he is the wrong; but the serpent kept quiet and thus the Āḷvār proved the innocence of the devotees. From that moment, he became vexed with his

30. S. I. I. Vol. III p. 150.

31. Kulacēkarar pp. 10.

32. Malabar Manual : p. 246.

scheming ministers, and leaving his kingdom, in charge of his son, he retired to the forest.[33]

Kulacēkarā as per Guruparamparai:

A study of the Guruparamparai about Kulacēkarā brings about seven aspects of him clearly:—

(1) To see Lord Ranganatha of Srirangam and mix with the Vaishnavite devotees, are his ardent passions.

(2) He preferred the worship of the Bhaktas to the worship of the Lord himself.

(3) He had a clear conviction that the Bhaktas of the Lord will never dream of any evil act and they are pure in heart, word and deed.

(4) He has composed the 'Mukuntha mālai' in Sanskrit first, and later composed the soul—stirring songs of 'Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi'.

(5) He learned the Ramayana by hearing that 'Ithihasa' expounded by eminent pandits.

(6) He became so much absorbed in the incidents of the Ramayana, that he visualised them, as if, they are happening before his very eyes, and began to act in a manner worthy of emulation to a devotee of Rama.

(7) He never mixed with epicureans of the mundane world; he renounced his kingship and made pilgrimages to the temples of South India.

Though we cannot justify the veracity of all the aspects mentioned above, still we should not brush them aside, as if they are fabricated stories.

Thus, in fine, we are able to gather the following facts about Kulacēkara, from what have stated above:—

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33. Thiru M. Raghava Ayyangar, Cēra Vēntar Ceyyuṭ-kōvai, Vol. II p. 1.

That Kulocēkara was a good ruler of the Cēra country that he became so much immersed in devotion to Vishnu, that he wanted to undertake pilgrimage to Srirangam and other places, that he is particularly attached to the Lord's devotees, that he is steeped in the Ramayana, that he is well-versed in Sanskrit as in Tamil, and that he lived in the 8th Century A.D.

His 'Perumāḷ Tirumoḷi' contain 105 pasurams or stanzas and we shall deal about them a little bit in detail, in the pages that follow :

'Perumāḷ Tirumoḷi'

Origin of the Name :

Because these stanzas have their reference mostly to 'Periya Perumāḷ'[34] of Srirangam, this is called 'Perumāḷ Tirumoḷi'. 'Tirumoḷi' as already stated, means 'divine utterances'.

Commentaries :

The Great Acharyas like Periyavāccan Piḷḷai have given commentaries for these stanzas in marvellous manner and they are really a treat for the scholars.

The Structure of 'Perumāḷ Tirumoḷi'

The first three chapters (let us term each 'Tirumoḷi' as a chapter) of the Perumāḷ Tirumoḷi deal with the Lord of Srirangam; the fourth deals with the Lord Venkateswara of Tirupati Hills; the fifth deals with the Lord of Vittuvak-Kōṭu in the Cērā (present Kerala) country. These five chapters deal in essence with the 'Archavatara'[35] of the Lord. Kulacēkarā was also deeply immersed in the 'Vibhava avatara'[36] of the Lord especially in Rama Avatara and Krishna Avatara. The latter five chapters (6 to 10) deal about both Rama and Krishna. The sixth and seventh chapters refer to Krishnavatara. In the sixth, the Āḷvār assumes the garb of the Gopis and began to chastise the Lord

34. The Lord of Sri Rangam is popularly known as 'Periya Perumāḷ' in the Vaishnavite parlance.

35. 'Archavatara' means the incarnation of the Lord in idols or Vigrahas.

36. 'Vibhava Avatara' means the Lord taking human forms.

in derison, enraged in love-quarrel. The seventh chapter is in the nature of a lament, wherein Devaki laments that she was not destined to enjoy the boyish pranks of Lord Krishna, her son. The Āḷvār assumes that garb of Devaki. The 8th, 9th and 10th chapters refer to Ramavatara. In the 8th chapter the Āḷvār assumes the garb of Kousalya, the mother of Rama and then sing the cradle-song to the child to get sleep. The 9th chapter deals with the lament of Dasaratha, when his son Rama left him for the forest. Āḷvār assumes the garb of Dasaratha. The 10th and final chapter of Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi is the summary of the Ramayana story rendered in a subtle, succinct and precise manner in eleven stanzas. Thus an analysis of the contents of 'Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi' has been given in a nut-shell here.

Total stanzas:

The first, fourth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth chapters each contain, eleven stanzas, whereas the second, fifth and sixth chapters, each contain ten stanzas and the third chapter contains only nine stanzas. Thus, in all, 'Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi' contains 105 stanzas. These chapters receive their names from the phrase of words used at the commencement. For example, the first chapter is titled as 'Iruḷiriya-c-Cuṭarmaṇikaḷ' for the opening stanza in the first chapter begins with those words. The inscriptions of Later cōḷās are evident to this fact.[37] This sort of titling is common also to the chapters that follow.

Characteristics of the Āḷvār as gleaned from his utterances:

(1) His deep devotion to Lord Ranganatha of Srirangam

The Āḷvār melts in his heart of hearts exclaiming: When I am going to see and enjoy the 'dharsan' of Arangan, the Lord of Srirangam who reclines on the serpent Adhisesha with thousand heads taking His abode in the 'Periya Kōil'[38] surrounded by the river Cauvery.[39] He spurts out his desire to sing in praise of

37. S. I. I. Vol. III, p. 150.

38. The temple of Sri Rangam is popularly known as 'Periya Kōil' in Vaishnavite parlance.

39. P. Tirumoḻi : I : 1.

the Lord, by standing before His sanctum sanctorum, holding the 'celestial pillar'[40] by his hand.[41] He desires to worship the Lord by showering flowers on His Lotus feet.[42] He prays for the day to worship, the Lord of Srirangam before whom Thumburu and Narada stand with the lyre in their hands to sing His glory.[43] He wants to have the 'dharsan' of the lotus eyes of the Lord as well as His face which shines like the moon.[44] He wants to shed tears of joy on seeing the Lord and to prostrate before Him. He explains his desire to dance in ecstatic joy rolling himself on the ground in the midst of the crowd of the Bhaktas who will be singing the glory of the Lord with tears, swelling in their eyes and the divine music emanating from the instruments played by them.[45]

(2) Description of the Lord of Srirangam

The Ālvār describes the Lord of Srirangam in glowing terms He reclines on the serpent Adisesha with thousand heads,[46] Looking towards Lanka to his south.[47] He takes his abode in the 'Periya Kōil' surrounded by the River Cauvery.[48] He created from the lotus flower, which emanated from his naval.[49] He is 'The essence of Tamil poetry and the embodiment of Sanskrit."[50] He is surrounded by the Devas, the Rishis, Brahma, Siva and Indra as well as by the celestial damsels.[51] They vie with one another jostling with each other for worshipping Him with

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40. There is a pillar in the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Lord very near to Him, and this is called 'maṇattūṇ' by the Vaishnavites.
41. P. Tirumoḻi : I : 2.
42. -do- I : 3.
43. -do- I : 5.
44. -do- I : 6.
45. -do- I : 9.
46. -do- I : 1.
47. -do- I : 10.
48. -do- I : 1.
49. -do- I: 3.
50. -do- I : 4.
51. -do- I : 6.

flowers.[52] His temple is always crowded with the Vaishnavite devotees, who control all the five senses and who worship the Lord five times a day.[53] The Lord has the 'Panchayudhas' (five weapons) in His hands with the fleet-footed garuda keeping sentry on Him.[54] The Lord of Srirangam is mainly responsible for the Devas as well as for men to live in happiness, cleansed of all their sins.[55] He is not easily approachable by our own efforts; He is the bestower of strength; He is pleasing to look at; Goddess Lakshmi is always with Him. He wears the 'vanamālai' or garland of basil of His chest.[56] He took the 'Varaha Avatara' to relieve Mother Earth from the demons. He has taken the 'Tirivikrama Avatara' to measure the worlds.[57] He is the Lord who was born in this world as Rama to eradicate evil. He pierced the 'Sola' tree by his arrow.[58] During his Krishnavatara, He was caught hold of by Yasodha and was tied with a rope to the mortar for having stolen curd milk and butter to be taken as food at a time;[59] He was able to subdue the seven sturdy bulls to marry Nappinnai, the 'Āyar girl' (Shepherdess);[60] He grazed the cattle as cow-boy.[61] He possesses never ending mercy to forgive sins of his devotees and showers grace upon them.[62]

(3) His devotion to Lord Srinivasa of Tirumalai hill:

Just as the Āḷvār has great devotion towards the Lord of Srirangam, so also he is having the same intense devotion towards the Lord of Tiruvēṇkaṭam also. The Āḷvār craves to have his birth in the Tirumalai hills, wherein resides Lord Venkateswara.

52. P. Tirumoḻi : I : 6
53. -do- I : 7.
54. -do- I : 8.
55. -do- I : 10.
56. -do- II : 1.
57. -do- II : 3.
58. -do- II : 2.
59. -do- II : 4.
60. -do- II : 3.
61. -do- II : 2.
62. -do- II : 6.

He wants only service at the feet of Lord Srinivasa of Tiru-vēṅkaṭam. He craves to take a birth even as a stork in the tank called, 'Kōṉēri' on the hills;[63] He says, that he will be too highly glad, if he is destined to take birth as a fish in one of the hill springs of the Vēṅkaṭam Hill.[64] He craves to do service to the Lord by carrying his spittoon made of gold along with the servants of the temple (Kainkarya paras).[65] He wants to be born as 'Chaṇpaca tree' (michaelia champaca) so that he may be seeing the lotus feet of the Lord always;[66] He prays for the day when he will be destined to stand as a flag-pole in the temple of the Lord,[67] or to be one of the golden peaks among the ranges of the Tirumalai Hills;[68] or to be a jungle river flowing through the ranges;[69] he wants to be the pathway leading to the Vēṅkaṭam Hills, so that he will be sanctified by the dust, raised by the holy feet of the devotees, who go up the hill for the 'dharsan' of the Lord;[70] he sincerely craves to be one of the steps inside the sanctum sanctorum, so that he may be blessed by constantly looking at the Lord's coral-red mouth.[71] (Note: The stony step that is before Lord Venkateswara is still to-day called as 'Kulacēkaraṉpaṭi', reminiscent of wish of this Āḻvār). Thus, he wants to take any birth in the Vēṅkaṭam Hills as an animate or inanimate object renouncing even his kingship or heavenly enjoyments in the world.[72]

(4) His devotion to the Lord of Vitthuvakkōṭu:

The Āḻvār's devotion here is very intense. He seeks shelter under the divine and sublime grace of the Lord Vitthuvakkōṭu,

63. P. Tirumoḻi: IV : 1.
64. -do- IV : 2.
65. -do- IV : 3.
66. -do- IV : 4.
67. -do- IV : 5.
68. -do- IV : 6.
69. -do- IV : 7.
70. -do- IV : 8.
71. -do- IV : 9.
72. -do- IV : 10.

near Pattambi in the Kerala State.[73] He gives expression to his 'Ananyagatitvam' (helplessness and parlorn state). In this connection, the Āḷvār uses various similes to bring out his 'ananyagatitvam'. (Note: Incidentally these similes bring out his erudition and scholarship). The following are a few examples given:

Just as a child, which has been kicked away by its mother in anger, looks to the same mother for her grace, so also the Āḷvār says that though he has been thrust out to undergo sufferings, yet he will seek solace under him. He solely surrenders himself to Him for the redressal of his grievances, which, in turn, are all by Him.[74]

Just as a chaste wife will always look to her husband for succour and solace even though he may treat her with contempt, so also, the Āḷvār says, that he knows nothing but His lotus feet whether he accepts him or not.[75]

Just the subject under a ruler, look always for the grace of their ruler, though he may be a tyrant, similarly the Āḷvār says, that he is always looking to His grace, though He forsaken by Him to allow in miseries.[76]

Just as a patient who has undergone sufferings during the process of surgical operation from fissures, cauterized wounds and sutras looks at the same time to the surgeon himself for eradication of pain, so also the Āḷvār says, that he is looking to His grace for redressal of grievances.[77]

Just as a sea-gull, which originally perched on the mast of a ship, after flying all around in vain to reach the shore, return back to the same mast for perching, similarly in crossing the ocean of 'Samsara' (mundane pleasures), the Āḷvār says, that

73. Thiru M. Raghava Ayyangar, Cēra Vēntar Ceyyuṭ kōvai, Vol. II p. 21.
74. P. Tirumoḻi: V: 1.
75. -do- V: 2.
76. -do- V: 3.
77. -do- V: 4.

having failed to secure any solace after leaving His lotus feet, now wants to cling to it again.[78]

Just as the Lotus-flower blossoms only when the sun's warmth is felt by it and not by anything else, the Āḷvār, says, that his heart melts only when expressing His boundless 'Kalyana gunas' (divine virtues) and to nothing else.[79]

Just as the crop in a field will always look to the sky for rain in order to survive, so also Āḷvār says, that for his survival he will place his heart steeped in devotion only to Him.[80]

Just as all the rivers flow into the sea and reach their finality, similarly the Āḷvār says, that he has no other final shelter, except His grace and goodness.[81]

Finally, the Āḷvār says, just as wealth desires to be with an individual, who is not very particular about it, similarly, he will always desire to be with Him, though He is not particular about him.[82]

(5) His devotion to the Lord of Tirukkaṇṇapuram viewing Him as Sri Ramachandra:

The Āḷvār assumes the role of Kausalya, the mother of Sri Ramachandra and ponders over his heroic deeds and puts them in the form of a cradle-song. In this lullaby, some of the Ramayana incidents are referred to.[83] Incidentally, this lullaby brings out the greatness of Tirukkaṇṇapuram and its substance is given in Appendix No. VII (i).

(6) His devotion to the Lord of Tillainagar, Tiru-c-citrakūṭam (Modern Cidambaram) viewing Him as Sri Ramachandra:

When speaking about this Lord of Tillainagar Tiru-c-citrakūṭam, the Āḷvār gives the entire Ramayana story having Valmiki as

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78. P. Tirumoḷi: V : 5.
79. -do- V : 6.
80. -do- V : 79.
81. -do- V : 8.
82. -do- V : 9.
83. Vide Caption "Ramayana incidents mentioned." (IXth Tirumoḷi).

his ideal[84] and the substance of these Pasurams is given in Appendix No VII (2).

Just as the Āḷvār is much attached to Ramavatara,[85] he is also attached to Krishnavatara.[86]

(7) Temporary variance and huff between Krishna and the Gopis:

Here the Āḷvār elucidates how the Gopis speak in derision about Krishna. They are standing on a sand-dune on the banks of the river Jumna, in winter season, shivering with cold due to the blowing of the winter-wind. They were standing there, waiting for their lover Krishna to come and embrace them, but he has not come there as expected and hence the Gopis chastise him by saying that they have to suffer because of trusting in his words.[87] The chastisment of the Gopis is given in Appendix No. VII (4).

The lamentation of Devaki: Devaki laments that she is not able to enjoy the childish pranks of Sri Krishna as she has been destined to live in prison. The Āḷvār assumes the garb of Devaki in this lamentation and the stanzas in this chapter bristle with pathos when sung and bring tears in our eyes.[88] The substance of these stanzas is given in Appendix No. VII (5).

(8) Craving to do service to the Lord's Devotees:

The Āḷvār wants to mingle with those devotees who are practically maddened by attachment towards Him and who sing His praise in ecstatic joy.[89] He wants to dance with them singing

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84. Xth Tirumoḷi.

85. Āḷvār's special attachment towards Rama : – This is evident in the wailing of Dasaratha over the separation of his son Rama when he went to the forest for fourteen long years. The Āḷvār gives expression to his painful feelings in such stirring songs, putting himself in the gait of Dasaratha. This substance of this chapter given in Appendix. VII–3.

86. VII Tirumoḷi.

87. VIth Tirumoḷi.

88. VIth Tirumoḷi.

89. P. Tirumoḷi I : 10.

the glory of the Lord.[90] He wants to smear his body with the sanctified dust of the dancing feet of these devotees and considers this dust as superior to the waters of the Ganges in purity and holiness.[91] Further, he wants to wear the dust on his forehead as 'tilak'.[92] He wants to chant the name of Narayana along with them at the top of his voicc.[93] He always wants to do service to the Lord's devotees, to prostrate them to go on pilgrimage with them to all the 'Divyadesams'.[94]

(9) Āḷvār's aversion to worldly pleasures:

The Āḷvār is against rubbing shoulders with the epicureans of this mundane world. He believes, that this life is ephemeral.[95] He does not want to join the people who wallow in lust,[96] who are servants of Cupid[97] and who always run after food, clothing and shelter.[98] He did not want to mix with people, who have no love towards the Lord.[99] He does not want to mingle with the services and he deems the entire people in this world excluding himself as mad; no doubt, he calls himself as mad also but he says he is mad after God.[100]

Some more gleanings from the Āḷvār's compositions:

(i) Hints about the Author of Kulacēkarā

In the last stanza of every chapter, there is a reference to the author. From this, we can glean that Kulacēkarā was not only the king of the Cērās with 'Koḷḷi' as the capital, but also of the Pāṇḍiyās with 'Kūṭal' or 'Madurai' as the capital and

90. P. Tirumoḷi : I : 9.
91. -do- II : 2.
92. -do- II : 3.
93. -do- II : 4.
94. -do- II : 6.
95. -do- III : 1.
96. -do- III : 2.
97. -do- III : 3.
98. -do- III : 4.
99. -do- III : 5.
100. -do- III : 8.

of the Cōḷās with 'Koḷi' or 'Uṛaiyur' as the capital. He had infantry, which has the spear as its main weapon. He has the regalia of the umberlla, sword etc. Thus he was a great ruler ruling over the three Tamil kingdoms of the South.

(ii) Greatness of the Tamil language

Kulacēkarā eulogises the Tamil language in his pasurams; for example he refers to the Lord of Srirangam as 'an embodiment of the Tamil language'.[101] Further, he refers to the language as a 'refined' one, containing chaste sweet words.[102] He styles Agastya as 'the sage of the fertile Tamil language'.[103]

(iii) Description of cities

Kulacēkārā in his songs refers to the cities of Tiruvaraṅkam, Tiruvēṅkaṭam, Vittuvakkōṭu, Tirukkaṇṇapuram, Tillainakar–Tirucitrakūṭam and Ayodhya and we shall see a few facts about each of them below:

(*a*) *Tiravaraṅgam*: This is said to be a big city with parapet walls on all sides, and containing very high buildings. It is studded with gardens and is surrounded by paddy fields. The temple of the Lord is in the centre and the Lord is reclining on the serpent facing South. Further, it is a beautiful city occupied by eminent sages, who have no desire at all for earthly pleasures.[104]

(*b*) *Tiruvēṅkaṭam*: This is said to contain gardens with flowers, wherein the bees hum various 'ragas'.[105]

(*a*) *Vittuvakkōṭu*: This is said to be surrounded by high parpet walls and also by flower-gardens and paddy-fields rich in fertility, due to plentiful water. This Vittuvakkōṭu is said to be in the vicinity of Kollinagar (கருவூர்) the capital of this Cērā King by Mahavidvan R. Raghava Iyengar. He says, that the

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101. P. Tirumoḷi: I: 4.

102. -do- I: 11; II: 10; IV: 11; V: 10; VI: 10; VII: 11. IX: 11 and X: 11.

103. -do- X: 5.

104. P. Tirumoḷi I.

105. -do- IV.

region wherein this Vishnu temple is situated (on the banks of the Porunai river) is called Vittuvakkōṭu and even to-day, the Brahmin agraharam around the temple is called Vittuvakkōṭu Agraharams. Thus, this Vittuvakkōṭu should be placed very near the capital of the Cērā king. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that Nammāḷvār who sang about almost all the Tirupathis (holy shrines) in Kerala State has omitted this Vittuvakkōṭu. Thus this kshetra is unknown to Nammāḷvār and known only to Kulacēkarā.[106]

(d) Tirukkaṇṇapuram: This is surrounded by high parapet walls and is inhabited by erudite scholars. This is watered by a branch of the Cauvery and it contains various theerthams (Holy tanks), whose water is considered to be holier than even the water of the Ganges. Rich flower gardens abound here and the bees hum 'Kāmaram' raga, when sucking honey from the flowers. The Lord Kaṇṇapuram is very attractive and entices the hearts of those who come to worship Him.[107]

(*e*) *Tillai Nagar-Tirucitrakūṭam:* This is surrounded by high parapet walls, impregnable to enemies and also studded with gardens.[108]

(f) Ayodhya: This is said to have high parapet walls on all sides.[109]

The Āḷvār refers also to places like Lanka in the South[110] and Tiruvālinagar in the Tanjore District.[111]

(iv) Hints about Music:

The bees hum the raga (tune) or paṇ 'Kāmaram'.[112] This paṇ is identified as 'Nadanamakriya' in the mēḷa-karta scale of

106. P. Tirumoḷi: V.
107. -do- VIII.
108. -do- X.
109. -do- VIII: 6 and X: 1.
110. -do- VIII: 3.
111. -do- VIII: 7.
112. -do- IV: 4.

Carnatic music. They also sing the 'aḷathi' or 'alapana' i.e., expansion of a raga in high low and medial octaves.[113] The burden of the songs ending in 'thalēlō' in the eighth chapter reminds us of the fact that these songs are rendered in the Neelambari Raga of the carnatic music scale, as it is a lullaby song.[114]

(v) The way in which Tirumāl has been mentioned in the Prabhandam :

He is called 'Māyōṉ'[115] 'Ammāṉ',[116] 'Māl',[117] Kaṇṇaṉ ;[118] He is termed 'the king of the Devas',[119] 'a lion among the cowherds',[120] 'an embodiment of the sweetness of Tamil and Sanskrit languages',[121] ,'as the supreme Lord of the Universe',[122] 'as one who possesses the Chakra',[123] and the Vaṉamālai[124] 'as a tonic to the sufferer',[125] He is personified as beauty,[126] as honey,[127] as effulgence,[128] as a lamp of the Solar race,[129] as a thick black cloud.[130] He is termed also as 'the son of

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113. P. Tirumoḻi: IV : 6.
114. Lullaby songs are usually sung in 'Neelambari' Raga in the world of Carnatic music and this theme is very popular with mothers who sing songs to lull their children to sleep.
115. -do- I : 2.7.
116. -do- I : 3.
117. -do- I : 4.
118. -do- I : 4.
119. -do- I : 4.
120. -do- I : 4.
121. -do- I : 4.
122. -do- X : 1.
123. -do- I : 9.
124. -do- II : 1.
125. -do- VIII : 6.
126. -do- I : 1.
127. -do- II : 1.
128. -do- II : 7.
129. -do- X : 1.
130. -do- X : 1.

Dasaratha ',[131] 'the husband of Sita',[132] 'the king of Ayodhya',[133] 'the destroyer of enemies'.[134] He is called as 'Empirāṉ',[135] Nāraṇaṉ,[136] Attaṉ,[137] Accaṉ,[138] Āyaṉ,[139] Aiyaṉ,[140] Neṭiyōṉ,[141] Vācutēvaṉ,[142] Dāmōdaraṉ,[143] Nampi,[144] Kēcavaṉ,[145] Kulakaṉ,[146] Raghavaṉ.[147] Maintaṉ[148] etc.

(vi) Description of Tirumāl:

He reclines on Adisesha; He is lotus-eyed with face as bright as the moon;[149] He dons the Panchayudha and rides on the Garuda;[150] His consort Lakshmi is always with him ever-residing in His chest; He is always in good smile, with red lips and with pearl garlands;[151] He resides in the whole universe;[152] He wears the Peethambara (gold garments) and has beautiful curly hairs; the Vaṉamālai (garland of basil) bangs on His chest; He wears peacock feathers on His head;[153] His gait is that of a elephant.[154]

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131. P. Tirumoli : VIII : 3 & 4.
132. -do- VIII : 4.
133. -do- VIII 6 : 7.
134. -do- X : 3.
135. -do- III : 6.
136. -do- III : 3.
137. -do- II : 9.
138. -do- II : 9.
139. -do- III : 5.
140. -do- III : 1.
141. -do- IV : 9.
142. -do- VI : 1.
143. -do- VI : 2.
144. -do- VI : 5.
145. -do- VII : 2.
146. -do- VII : 7.
147. -do- VII : 2, 3, 5.
148. -do- X : 2.
149. -do- I : 6.
150. -do- I : 8.
151. -do- II : 1.
152. -do- II : 6.
153. -do- VI : 9.
154. -do- VII : 1.

(vii) Ramayana incidents mentioned :

Kulacēkarā is deeply captivated by the Ramayana and it is no wonder that he gives expression to the Ramayana incidents in his pasurams, assuming the garbs of Kausalya and Dasaratha, the mother and father of Rama. The mother's lullaby and the father's wailing have been mentioned in the Appendix VII (1), and they enlighten the reader as to how much the Āḷvār is immersed in Ramavatara, in the last chapter (Xth Tirumoḷi) the Āḷvār gives the summary of the entire Ramayana from His birth upto his disappearance from this world unto the Paramapatha. Appendix VII (2). His birth in Ayodhya, the destruction of Thadaka to protect the yagna of Viswamitra, the marriage with Sita after breaking the bow of Siva, the departure to the Dandaka forest leaving the kingdom as per the directions of Kaikeyi, the crossing of the Ganges with the help of Guha, the handing over the sandals to Bharatha at Chitrakūṭa, the slaying of Viratha, the receipt of the divine bow from Agastya, the cutting off the nose of Soorpanaka, the destruction of Kara, Dushana and Mareecha, the pining over the separation of Sita and going in search of her, the sending of Jatayu to Moksha, the making of friendship with the Vanara Sugriva and bringing about the destruction of Vali, the burning of Lanka through Maruthi or Hanuman, the construction of the Bridge across the sea, the crossing over to Lanka and bringing out its destruction as well as its ruler, Ravana, the giving of the Lanka Kingdom to Vibishana and returning to Ayodhya in triumph with Sita, the hearing of the recital of the Ramayana through the mouth of his sons Lava and Kusa, the destruction of Chamupuka by Rama and of Lavana by Satrugna, the separation from Lakshmana, his younger brother, and lastly himself quitting this world to go to Paramapatha, after sending all the animate and inanimate beings to Vaikunta, these are the main incidents that have been given expression to, in his poems.[155]

(viii) Incident of Krishnavatara :

The Āḷvār says, that Krishna destroyed Kesi, the Asura, who came in the form of a horse; protected the cows and

155. P. Tirumoḷi : VIII, IX and Xth Tirumoḷis.

cowherds from heavy rain by lifting aloft the Govardhana Hill;[156] humbled the seven bulls for the sake of marrying Nap-pinnai;[157] stealing of butter and milk leading to his capture by Yasodha, who tied him with rope to a mortar.[158]

The sixth chapter (VIth Tirumoli) gives fully the pranks and plays of Lord Krishna with the Gopis of Āyppādi (vide Appendix No. VII (4).

(ix) Similes :

(1) The fire emitted by Adisesha is compared to a balcony made of red flowers.[159]

(2) The black complexion of Vishnu is compared to the blue flower garland made of 'Kāyā' (memecylon edule).[160]

(3) The sound of the drums beaten at the temple of Srirangam resembled the roar of the sea.[161]

(4) The delicate waist of the ladies is compared to a fine thread[162] and to lightning.[163]

The fifth chapter (Vth Tirumoli) abounds in beautiful similies which have already been dealt with in detail under the caption "His devotion to the Lord of Vittuvakkōtu".

(x) Pathos in his poems :

The seventh chapter (VIIth Tirumoli), which depicts the wailing of Devaki and the Ninth chapter (IXth Tirumoli) which depicts the wailing of Dasaratha are fitting examples for the pathetic strain. We have already referred to these poems in detail.

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156. P. Tirumoli : I : 4.
157. -do- II : 3.
158. -do- II : 4.
159. -do- I : 2 : 2.
160. -do- I : 2 : 3.
161. -do- I : 9 : 3.
162. -do- III : 8 : 1.
163. -do- IV : 6 : 1.

(xi) Pranks of childhood References:

In the Seventh Chapter (VIIth Tirumoḷi), we find references to the childish pranks of Sri Krishna and also to his enchanting beauty, as a baby lying in the cradle. References to childhood activities are in plenty, in the wailing of Devaki.

Conclusion:

Thus, in short, we find in the Perumāḷ Tirumoḷi of Kulacēkarā, its loftiness, its dignity, its eminence as poetry, beautiful similies references to childish pranks, pathos, descriptive acumen, incidents of Ramavathara and Krishnavatara, intense devotion of the devotees towards the Lord, and the deep unfathomable devotion of the Āḷvār towards Vishnu.

SAIVITE LITERATURE

1. PON-VAṆṆA-T-TANTĀTI

Among the 96 Prabandhams, Antati is one and it is classified under 'Viruntu' by Tolkāppiyaṉār.[1] An Antāti is a poem in which the last letter, syllable or foot of the last line of one stanza is identical with the first letter, syllable or foot of the succeeding stanza, the sequence being kept on between the last and the first stanza of the poem as well.[2] Even in the Sangham verses, we find phrases and words coming in 'Antāti' fashion.[3]

According to chronology, we can say that an earliest employment of Antāti metre is to be found in Tirumūlar's Tirumantiram.[4] Next comes the Aṟputa-t-tiruvantāti of Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār in Veṇpā metre; then, we can place this Poṉ-Vaṇṇa-t-tantāti of Cēramāṉ Perumaḷ Nāyaṉār of the 9th century A.D.

Cēramāṉ Perumāḷ Nāyaṉār, the author of this Poṉ-Vaṇṇa-t-tantāti, was a Cērā ruler as his name indicates. His real name is Māk-Kōtaiyār and it is said he succeeded one Ceṅkōr-Poṟaiyaṉ and had his capital at Makōtai, also known as Koṭuṅkōlūr.[5] He had got the divine power of understanding the speeches of the lower animals as well, and hence came to be termed as 'Kaḷaṟiṟṟaṟivar' (i.e. one who knows what is spoken).[6] He is a great Saiva devotee and a contemporary and friend of Cuntaramūrtti Nāyaṉār.

1. Tol : Poruḷ : Ceyyuḷiyal : 237.
2. Tamil Lexicon p. 82.
3. Compare Ciṟupāṇ. 14-25 : Naṟ : 82-95 Aiṅ : 18th Teṇ ; Puṟa : 2.
4. 4th Tantiram.
5. P. Purāṇam – Cēramāṉperumāḷ Nāyaṉār Purāṇam : 1.
6. -do- 14.

Once this Cēramāṉ had a desire to see his friend at Tiruvārūr and hence he set out from his capital city.[7] On the way, he came to Cidambaram, had the 'dharsan' of Nataraja and then composed this Poṉ-Vaṇṇa-t-tantāti.[8] Lord Siva, as a token of His acceptance of the poem, made his anklet sound and this is considered to be the highest reward for the work.[9]

This is called 'Poṉ-Vaṇṇa-t-tantāti', because the work begins with the first Cīr (foot) as 'Poṉ-vaṇṇam'. The word 'Poṉ' denotes 'mangalam or prosperity' and hence it is a suitable word for the commencement of a poetical work.

The text contains 100 stanzas in Kaṭṭaḷaik-kalitturai metre,[10] and it is very rich in ideas; it is fit to be rated as one of the best pieces of 'Antāti' literature.

Facets of the 'Antāti'

Author's intense devotion to Siva:

The author has dedicated his mind to the thought of Siva, his tongue to speak about His glory, his head to bow down before Him, his hands to worship Him, his entire body to do service to Him and his devotion to be one with Him.[11]

Portrayal of Lord Siva:

Lord Siva is in the hearts of the devotees in the same form, as they visualize to Him and mediate upon; He is said to possess a golden frame, a dalliant 'Jata' (matted locks of hair) and He mounts on a bull resembling a silver hill.[12]

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7. P. Purāṇam: 45.
8. -do- 56.
9. -do- 57.
10. Kaṭṭaḷaik-kalitturai: "A kind of 'kali-t-turai' verse of four lines of five feet each, in which every line has 16 syllables if the first syllable is a nēr, and 17 if the first is nirai, and the stanza always ends in ē" (Tamil Lexicon; vol. II; p. 647).
11. P. Antāti: 92.
12. -do- 1.

He is the sole cause of the functioning of the Universe and he who sings His glory is sure to attain bliss, both in this world and in the next.[13] The dances He made during His wanderings have been styled as 'Nāṭakam'. He made the wives of the 'Tarukavana Rishis', shed their bangles and had taken away all of them, as if they were His 'food'. His form is coral-red; His utterances are the Vedas; and He revels in His praises by the Devas.[14] He has created and reserved the Heaven (Sivaloga) for those whose heart pine after Him, who shed tears of joy, whose faces become dalliant while the 'Astangas' touch the ground when prostrating before Him.[15] Those who do service to Siva will enjoy heavenly bliss as Devas, and those who do not do so will wallow in this mundane earth leading a wretched life begging for alms.[16] Siva has the earth as His legs; Surya, Chandra, Agni as His eyes; the wind as His breath; the sea as His garment; the sky as His crown; the atmosphere as His body; the Vedas as His face; the 'Disas' (cordinal points) as His shoulders and His panegyric as the music. Thus, His Transcendental Form is depicted.[17]

The matted locks of hair of Siva is long and flowy; from it flows the Ganges; the Crescent moon shines on it. Snakes move about freely; and the 'Konrai' adorns the whole.[18] The Lord is like an 'Amalaka' fruit,[19] which when taken in proper doses will elongate a man's duration of life and he seeks refuge under His feet.[20]

He is the embodiment of Dharma, primordial and is the cause of the origin of the Four Vedas; He is the Lord of the

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13. P. Antati: 5.
14. -do- 7.
15. -do- 11.
16. -do- 12.
17. -do- 19.
18. -do- 39.
19. The 'Amalaka' fruit taken in by Auvaiyār, when given to her by Atiyamān may be remembered here (Puṟa: 99).
20. P. Antati 40.

seven seas and seven 'Dweepas'; He is of eight Gunas; He resides in Mount Kailas as well as in the hearts of all.[21] Siva takes various forms out of Grace. He is night because of His dark neck; He is day because of His physical body; He is mountain (Kuriñci) because of His 'deer'.[22] He is forest (Mullai) because of His 'Konrai'.[23] He is 'Pathala', (Nagaloga) because of His snakes; He is the 'Akasa' (sky) because of the Crescent Moon on His head; and He is the sea, because of the Ganges on His head. It is to be noted that Siva is to be viewed as the embodiment of 'Kalapramanas' of the five regions, and of the five elements etc.[24] The Crescent Moon on the head of Siva suffers heated anguish because of the poisonous exhalations of the serpents who reside along side with it; but at the same time, it becomes cooled because of the cool waters of the Ganges. It melts in pity, when the Lord bows down His head falling at the feet of Parvati to pacify her anger; but at the same time, when after pacification the Lord approaches the Devi, it beautifies the earth as well as the heaven as the result of her joy. Thus pain and pleasure come alternately for the crescent moon on Siva's head.[25] The 'Bhoodha-ganas' (Demons) are the servants of the Lord and they have sunken eyes, crooked gait, curved teeth, cleft feet, a big waist, drooping ears like those of a tiger, shrunken breasts, curly hair, gapping mouth, loud voice, sunken stomach and twined fingers.[26] At the end of the Deluge, Siva has His 'Celestial Dance'; and during the Deluge, oceans upsurged; mountains fell; the earth went down to the abysmal depth; the 'Ashtanagas' (Eight serpents)[27] became disconcerted; the Eighteen 'Devaganas' were perplexed. The long matted lock of hair of Siva shone like lightning in the sky. The Devas stood

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21. P. Antāti: 53.
22. The 'Marai' or deer is in His hand.
23. The 'Konrai (Cassius Fistula) is a flower of the 'mullai' region.
24. P. Antāti: 57.
25. -do- 68.
26. -do- 75.
27. These eight serpents are said to be bearers of this earth in the Eight directions (Eight cardinal points).

amazed.[28] The sacred ashes smeared over Siva's body resembled the oozing out of 'Chandrakala' (Moon's brightness) being melted by the hot poisonous exhalations of the serpents, residing in the 'Jata' of the Lord. Further, the right and left halves in the body of Siva combined to form one 'Akara' which resembles the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna.[29]

Personal Touches:

The author says, that he has become vexed with this life of 'Samsara' because the Five senses simply torture him to death; but now he has found his solace at the feet of the Lord; as such, he has become calm in mind and his sins are wiped off.[30] He is unable to bear the struggles in life. Daily, he is fighting with diseases, old age and the God of Death. He is pent up with this life and hence he prays to God to bestow on him, His grace allowing him to be always near him.[31]

He says, even if he were to get mountains of gold without the grace of the Lord, he will treat them as poison and reject them. But, on the other hand, even if he were to take a worm's birth through the grace of the Lord, he will cherish it, as if he is born a 'Deva'.[32]

He says, that those who worship the Lord (like him) with purity of thought, word and deed will rise to sublime heights of glory like the 'Mēru' mountain.[33]

The author feels diffident to sing in praise of the Lord in verses, for he feels that when Brahma and Vishnu themselves are not in a position to realise Siva's greatness and glory, he won't be in a position to know even an iota of His eminence.[34]

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28. P. Antāti 86.
29. -do- 90.
30. -do- 18.
31. -do- 21.
32. -do- 43.
33. -do- 88.
34. -do- 89.

He says, that though he has been destined to have the Lordship over the world or to enter hell, or to lose the happiness in this world, or to take births in the lower scale of creation, he will never forget the holy feet of the Lord and he will always crave to have that boon only.[35]

Advice to humanity through addressing his heart :

"Always low before the feet of the Lord, sing His glory and dance with joy ; adorn Him with flowers and do service only to Him smear your body with the sacred ash and He will bestow on you salvation. Hence be care-free ".[36]

"Rise up. Do not go a begging from door to door in order to protect this ephemeral body, by uttering lies. On the other hand, if you approach the feet of Lord Siva, he will relieve you from distress in this world and grant you His grace".[37]

"All the 'angas' or organs of the body should be utilised only for service to the Lord and if they are not utilised in that way, they are useless and are only to be considered as burdensome"[38]

"Sing the praise of the Lord; do service to Him; feast your eyes on Him; cast off anger and other evil qualities; sublimate your desires; do not grieve—if you follow these injunctions you will attain heavenly bliss" [39]

"Half of our life is spent in sleep; in the remaining half we suffer from diseases and old age; and during most of the years, we wallow in bad qualities like fear, anger, avarice, and jealousy, Thus, all over life time is spent in vain. Hence, even-from now, we must meditate on Siva to obtain His grace".[40]

35. P. Antāti : 98.
36. -do- 10.
37. -do- 13.
38. -do- 42.
39. -do- 70.
40. -do- 99.

Philosophical ideas :

The heroine gives expression to the heavenly bliss (Sivanubavam) that she had experienced, when she enjoyed fully the 'Brilliance of Tatva-gnana' granted by Siva to her; In the process we lost ourselves in identity and 'His Arutprakasam' shone 'like a star apart'. Thus here is embedded a philosophical truth that the Jivatma is the heroine and the other 'Jivatma devotees' are lady-companions to that heroine.[41]

After the Jivatma enjoys 'Sivanubava', there will be no desire for rebirth; the heart becomes ennobled; the physical body becomes an object of contempt to be cast off; the wife and other relatives are no longer of any concern; the five senses became completely subdued; and the heart only hankers after the feet of the Lord.[42]

Always realise the truth that 'what is destined to come will certainly come and what is destined to go will certainly go'—So says, the heroine because when she bowed before the Lord Nataraja of Cidambaram, she lost her bangles and garments to her utter dismay.[43]

Just as a black crow which approaches the golden 'Mēru' gets itself changed into golden colour, so also those who approach Lord Siva, get themselves transformed to Godhead, that is to say, attain 'Sayujyam'.[44]

Pangs of separation :

The lady-love longs to have the 'Konrai' garland (cassia fistula) of Siva. Her eyes begin to shed tears, her bangles and garments begin to slip off from their positions, her face starts to sweat and her physical frame grows pale with grief.[45]

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41. P. Antāti: 22.
42. -do- 23.
43. -do- 84.
44. -do- 100.
    Sayujyam :—is the condition to which the soul becomes absorbed in Godhead, the highest state of bliss.
45. P. Antāti 3.

The lady-love chastises Cupid as one who is always trying to give trouble to Siva. "He now aims arrows at me, realising that Siva, my hero, lives in my heart".[46]

The graceful from, which the Lord sometimes assumes is only to enchant the hearts of women leaving them to pine in grief[47] so says, the heroine.

The heroine says "that the Lord is 'Kālakālan̲' (Yama to Yama) and an antidote for the disease of births; He satisfies the desires of others like 'Cintāmaṇi' the divine gem; He is nectar —But all these good attributes he exhibits only towards his devotees and no doubt I am also one among them. But still the Lord makes me pine in grief when I bow before Him".[48]

She utters always the holy names of the Lord; her thoughts are always centred on the Lord; she wants to embarce Him with his Kon̲ṟai' garland and sandal-paste on his chest.[49]

Use of 'Akapporuḷ-tuṟais':

(i) Kan̲ā-nilai Uraittal (கனா நிலை உரைத்தல்):

Here the heroine expresses to her lady-companion the nature of the dream she had. "Siva came in the guise of a beggar (Bikshadanar) to beg for alms from every house; and because of my irresistible desire to see Him, I wish to go out to the entrance of the house under the pretext of putting alms into His bowl. Meanwhile my mother chastised me for having fallen in love with a madcap and dragged me inside into the house, thus preventing me from going out. I stood overwhelmed when the Lord signalled to me to go and embrace Him. At that moment, my eye-lids opened and then I realised that it was all a dream".[50]

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46. P. Antati: 44.
47. -do- 45 and 46.
48. -do- 83.
49. -do- 97.
50. -do- 2.

(ii) Veṟi-vilakkal (வெறி விலக்கல்):

This is in the form of the utterance of the heroine. She addresses her lady-companion and tells her as follows :—"Oh! my friend, you need not hasten to find out the cause of my distress through astrologers and soothsayers. I want only to enshrine in my heart the feet of the Lord, my hero; you cannot find my hero either in the astrologer or in the soothsayer but still you persist in the endeavour. I am really perplexed of your action".[51]

(iii) Uṭaṉpōkku (Elopement) (உடன் போக்கு):

This is in the form of an advice of the lady-companion to her heroine, when she was prepared to elope with her lover to his place without the knowledge of the parents. She says to the lady-love :—"Oh! Lady-love you must speak only the names of your Lord henceforth and not those of your parents or companions. Speak always of his good qualities; I am also deserting you now; you go after your Lord and always act as per his wishes; This is what you are expected to do and this will yield heavenly bliss".[52]

(iv) 'Ūṭal' (ஊடல்):

The heroine broods over the probability to feign displeasure towards her paramour Lord Siva and states, "I am not going to receive His 'Koṉṟai' garland, if he offers it to me; I am not going to allow Him to touch my garments. If he touches my head, I will get irritated; If he transcends decency and tries to touch my breasts, I will raise an alarm 'Do not outrage my chastity; this is not proper for one before whom the Devas bend and bow in respect' and if He tries further to touch my shoulders, I will exercise sovereign power and obstruct Him".[53]

How true and touching is this picture of 'Ūṭal'?

The heroine datalogue to her lady-companion, the hyprocritic actions of the Lord towards her. "The Lord is responsible for

51. P. Antāti : 85.

52. -do- 54.

53. -do- 63.

the gossip of the village about me. He left me to pine in life; made the bangles slip off my wrist; made the 'anril' bird[54] annoy me by its voice; made the gentle southern wind (Tenral) to grow harsh and blow on me ferociously; and, last but not the least, made my garments both upper and lower to slip off my body. Really, a deceitful person".[55]

(v) Wailing of the foster-mother:

"My daughter is still immature. Her teeth, breasts and locks have not yet developed fully. In spite of it, her body emits the perfume of the 'Konrai' flower, usually worn by Lord Siva; and for this, the people in the village began gossiping, as if they are aliens to her".[56]

Here the foster-mother pities the condition of her daughter. She has not done anything wrong to Siva, her Lover. But still, He reduced her to a skeleton and tries to take away her garments too. I do not know why the lord, whom she worship constantly behaves in this manner towards my daughter".[57]

The part played by the lady-companion:

(i) Consoling the lady-love:

"Oh! Lady-love! Your lover has given the golden colour of His 'Konrai' flower to your breasts;[58] He has turned the flood of His Ganga into your eyes; and He has handed over to your heart 'Ūmattam' flower (Datura).[59] Then why are you enraged against such a hero who has donated all His possessions to you".[60]

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54. The 'Anril'-bird of either sex is a well-known bird for its proverbial qualities of constancy and inseparable love.

55. P. Antāti 77.

56. -do- 27.

57. -do- 87.

58. The 'Cuṇaṅku' or sallow complexion on the breasts of the lady-love, will resemble the golden colour of the 'Konrai' flower.

59. 'Datura' is worn by Siva and it will also make one mad if he tastes it; it is poisonous.

60. P. Antati: 49.

(ii) The subtle way of chastising the lady-love:

" My heroine's face is the armoury for Cupid; her shoulders are the bamboo poles on which festoons are usually tied; her waist is his chariot usually stationed in front of his palace; her breasts are the 'Poorna Kumbams' to welcome Him as a harbinger of prosperity. And we all know that Cupid is a dead enemy (janma virodi) of Siva. Such being the truth, I am at a loss to understand, why this lady-love my heroine, prostrates before Siva. Is it to be taken as an act of intense love or deep hypocricy? I am unable to judge".[61]

(iii) Pitying the condition of the lady-love:

"Her garments slipped off like the words spoken by her lover; the bangles slipped off her wrists; tears rolled down and wetted her breasts; her ornaments seemed to be tettered like shreds of threads cut by sword of Cupid, the God of love. Really pathetic".[62]

"Oh! Nilakanta! You have taken away her bangles having an eye on it. Do you consider them essential for you to wear like your wood-apple flowers, bone garlands, 'Konrai' flowers, skin-attire or sacred ashes? In what way is this heroine indebted surrendering her bangles?"[63] "Though she is not beholden to the Lord Siva in any way, still she is gracious enough to give him a seat in her heart. As a recompense, the Lord has caused her distress. This is like one sitting on a branch of a tree and cutting the trunk beneath".[64]

"My heroine is not the same lady-love as before. There is a change in her; she sighs heavily; she weeps profusely; she is not of one mind; she had given a place for Siva in her eyes and laughs mildly. So she is new to me".[65]

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61. P. Antāti: 55.
62. -do- 58.
63. -do- 79.
64. -do- 80.
65. -do- 82.

(iv) **Finding fault with the hero**

Your actions like clipping off the head of Brahma, destroying Jalandara (the demon) burning of Cupid alive, setting fire to the Tiripuras (Three cities), and damming the Ganges by your matted locks of hair—all these bespeak your glory and tom-tom it. But such a glorious person has now descended to the level of capturing all the bangles of this lady-love my heroine. This is certainly a slur on you and I am really worried about it".[66]

Poetic excellance:

The word 'Vaṇṇam' is used twelve times in the stanza[67] of four lines, three in each line and this wordy feat is to be relished.

Humour is used subtly. Siva begged for food but ate poison. He clipped off the head of Brahma, the Creator, but bestowed grace on others. He burnt Cupid, the God of love, but at the same time, bears His consort Parvati on His left-half. Though having His abode in Mount Kailas, He used to reside in the branches of trees like the banyan, mango and Jack.[68]

Indebtedness to other works:

(i) **To Tirukkuṟaḷ**

When speaking about the result that Jivatma will experience after it enjoys 'Sivanubava', we find echoes of Tirukkuṟaḷ ideas.[69] "There will be no desire for rebirth; the heart becomes ennobled; the physical body becomes an object of contempt to

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66. P. Antāti: 81.

67. -do- 1.

68. -do- 4.

69. 'பிறவிப் பெருங்கடல் நீந்துவர்' (10)
'அடிசேர்ந்தார்க்கு யாண்டும் இடும்பை யில' (4)
'உரனென்னும் தோட்டியான் ஓரைந்துங் காப்பான்
வரனென்னும் வைப்பிற்கோர் வித்து' (24)
'சுவையொளி யூறோசை நாற்றமென் றைந்தன்
வகைதெரிவான் கட்டே யுலகு' (27)
'அடிசேர்ந்தார் நிலமிசை நீடு வாழ்வார்' (3)

be cast off; the wife and other relatives are no longer of any concern; the five senses become completely subdued; and the heart only hankers after the feet of the Lord".[70]

"All the 'angas' or organs of the body should be utilised only in the service to the Lord and if they are not utilised in that way, then they are useless and are only to be considered an unwelcome burden".[71]

(ii) **To 'Tirumuṟaikaḷ'**

(a) To Appar's Tēvāram:—"Even if I were to take a worm's birth through the grace of the Lord, I will cherish it as if I was born a Deva".[72]

(b) To Tiruvācakam:—'The Ardhanariswara Akara' of the Lord is an echo of the ideas in Tiruvācakam.[73]

(c) To Cīvakacintāmaṇi:—'The proverb used by Tiruttakka Tēvar in his Cīvakacintāmaṇi[74] has been utilised in this Antāti as follows:—'Ōrūriranṭakkaṉ kāṭṭiṉaiyāl'[75] The meaning of this proverb is, that 'one should not adopt two different attitudes in the same situation'.

Figures of speech used to embellish the verses:

(i) **Similes**

The body of Siva resembles the sun; his 'Jata' (matted locks of hair) the sun's brilliant rays; His blue stained neck—the darkness that ran before the effulgence of the 'Jata' and sought shelter; and the holy ashes on His body—the white clouds that gather below the darkness.[76]

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70. P. Antāti : 23.
71. -do- 42 Cp: 'கோளில் பொறியில் குணமிலவே எண்குணத்தான்
தாளை வணங்காத் தலை' (9)
72. -do- 43 Cp:
'புழுவாய்ப் பிறக்கினும் புண்ணியாஉன்னடி என்மனத்தே
வழுவாதிருக்க வரந்தர வேண்டும்.'
73. -do- 65 'பெண்பால் உகந்தான் பெரும்பித்தன் காணேடீ'
74. -do- Cintā : 2087.
75. P. Antāti 73.
76. -do- 26.

"Some people in the world, first enter into married life and becoming vexed with it take upto 'Sanyasa' and there also instead of becoming devoted to Lord Siva, they devote their mind in other things. Thus, they lose happiness both in this world as well as in the next (swarga). This state of vacillation and despondency is compared to the state of crocodile falling into a deep moat; it has to wait for its prey that comes accidentally before it, for, it cannot come up to the land surface to seek for its prey".[77]

Certain similes are linked to continuity (e.g.) The Lord's 'Jata' resembles the tongues of fire; the Ganges on it resembles the pouring by the Devas of 'Pāṟkaṭal' (ocean of Milk) on the fire to quench it; the crescent moon resembles a boat plying on the Ganges; and the snakes resemble the strong bamboo oars used to steer tho boat.[78]

(ii) Oxymoron

All the opposites have found refuge in Siva and live in amity forgetting their differences;[79] (e.g.) the water and the fire; the moon and the snake; the penance and the family tie;[80] the form and the formless; the Tiger[81] and the Deer; the day and the night.[82]

(iii) Niral Nirai

The 'Sankaranaryana form' of the Lord is spoken of as follows by using the 'opposites'. On the left half is situated Tirumāl with the sacred garland of basil, with gold garment, with disc in His hand and of black complexion; on the right half is His ownself with the 'Koṉṟai' garland with tiger-skin garment, with the Deer in His hand of red complexion. On the

77. P. Antāti: 64.
78. -do- 67.
79. -do- 50.
80. 'The family tie' is evident by having on his left half 'uma' his concert.
81. One tiger is spoken of as He wears the tiger skin.
82. All 'Kalapramanas' are His 'Svarupa'; further His body resembles the day, whereas His black neck the night.

left, is held the pot[83] for dance of Tirumāl and on the right is held the 'Kokkarai' (a kind of musical instrument) to be played on for dance of Siva.[84]

The 'Ardhanariswara Akara' of the Lord is beautifully depicted as follows: "On the right half of the Lord, the warriors anklet adorns the leg; snakes adorn as ornaments; further, the sacred ash is smeared all over; the right hand holds aloft the fire; there is also the garland of bones; the right hand holds the spear; the right half of the Lord has the matted locks of hair. Correspondingly on the left side the things visible are the women's anklet, gold ornaments, fragrant sandal paste, the ball. The left hand wields the ball and the disc. The gold necklace and the Kūntal (the long flowing tresses of women) also adorn the left side"[85]

The 'Akara of Siva' as 'Tirumurti' is spoken of as follows:— He is named Haran, Ayan, and Hari. He resides on the mountain (Mount Kailas), in the flower (lotus), and in the water (ocean of Milk). His complexion is that of fire gold and cloud. His garlands are 'Konrai' lotus and basil. His vehicles are the Bull, the Swan and the Kite (Garuda).[86]

Conclusion :

In fine, in this Antāti, we find Cēramān Perumāḷ's deep devotion, his poetic excellence, his broad-mindedness in inviting all to share the Heavenly bliss of Siva, his indebtedness to various predecessors, his knowledge of the Tirumūrais, his use of Aka-p-poruḷ Turais, his handling of the figures of speech, and his erudition and versatility.

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83. This dance with the pot on His head is called 'kuṭak-kūttu'.

84. P. Antāti : 6.

85. -do- 65.

86. -do- 95.

2. TIRUVĀRŪR MUMMAṆI-K-KŌVAI

'Kōvai' is a kind of Prabandam or poetical treatise. It is classified, as one among the 96 kinds or prabandams extant in the gamut of Tamil language and literature. It belongs to the category of 'Viruntu' according to Tolkāppiyam; and 'Viruntu' is a novel method of rendering poesy in a beautiful set-up.[1] Further this 'Kōvai' should be composed according to the grammatical standards fixed for Aka-p-poruḷ or love-themes; and they should be divided into subject—headings and sub-headings with 'tuṟais' or 'fields of expressions' as the main texture, with a continuity running from beginning to end.[2] If the poems smack of 'Srungara rasa', then it is classified as 'Akap-poruḷ-kōvai.'[3] It is also called, 'Ain-tiṇaik-kōvai' that is, a kōvai of 'five tiṇais', as it contains subject-matter, pertaining to all the 'five tiṇais' of the 'Akam' group; for example, the 'Kulōttuṅkan kōvai' gives currency to this expression,[4] as well as scholars like Turaimaṅkalam Civaprakācar[5] and Tiricirapuram Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai.[6]

The fundameatal cannons of the 'kōvai' prabandam are given expression to in Tolkāppiyam, Iṟaiyaṉār-Aka-p-poruḷ, Nambi Aka-p-poruḷ Vīra Cōḷiyam and Ilakkaṉa Viḷakkam works.

Another interpretation can be given of the word 'kōvai'. It is a garland of verses with continuity of substance and thought,

1. Tol : Poruḷ : Ceyyuḷiyal : 237.
2. "சில பிரபந்தங்களில் அகப்பொருள் இலக்கியச் செய்யுட்கள் அமைந்திருப்பினும் கிளவிகளாக வகுத்துத் துறைகளாக விரித்து ஒரு வரலாற்றுத் தொடர்ச்சி அமையக் கோக்கப்பெற்றுப் பாடப் படுவதாதலின் இந் நூல்வகை கோவை என்னும் பெயர் பெற்றது."
3. அகப்பொருட் சுவை தழுவி வருதலில் அகப்பொருட்கோவை என வழங்கப்பெறும்.
4. 'குலோத்துங்க சோழனைச் சொல்லியவைந் திணைக்கோவை பாட'.
5. 'திருந்துதமி ழிலக்கணவைந் திணைக்கோவை'.
6. 'நம்மா லியற்றிக் கொடுத்திடு மைந்திணைக்கோவை யேற்றனையால்'.

running unimpeded from beginning to end.[7] Dandi, the author of Aṇi Iyal (rhetoric) adduces this 'Kōvai' to the category of 'Ciṟu-Kāppiyam' or (minor—Kāppiyam) for example, he classifies a book, called 'Tamiḻa Muttaraiyar Kōvai' as a Ciṟu-Kappiyam.[8]

But 'Kōvai' as per the 'Veṇpāp-Pāṭṭiyal[9] and 'Paṉṉiru-Pāṭṭiyal'[10] (two grammar books on poesy and its rules), should contain four-hundred stanzas in 'Kaṭṭaḷai-k-kalitturai'[11] metre with love-themes, suited to the five akat-tiṇait-tuṟais with both 'Kaḷavu' (furtive love) and 'Kaṟpu' (Chastity) as major divisions. Thus, we have seen what a 'Kōvai' means. Now, let us turn to the contents of 'Mummaṇi-k-kōvai', the subject of study in this chapter.

The Structure of Mummaṇi-k-kōvai:

The 'Mummaṇi-k-kōvai prabandam should contain thirty stanzas in the following metre order:—first, nēricai Āciriyappa, Second Nēricai Veṇpā and third Kaṭṭaḷaik-kalitturai and the lie of the stanzas should be in 'Antāti' form, that is to say, the ending of the previous stanza should form the basis for the beginning of the next stanza, in letter, word, metrical syllable, rhyme or foot.[12]

Just as in a garland of nine gems, topaz, cats'-eye and sardonyx stand apart in effulgence by their differences in colours, so also in this garland of Mummaṇi-k-kōvai, the three stanzas, varied by their metre and coming at graded intervals in the order of 'Āciriyappā, Veṇpā, and Kaṭṭaḷaik-Kalittuṟai' mentioned above, shine in brilliance embellshing the theme.[13] The ending in the

7. Pērāciriyar's commentary on Tiruccirrampalak-kōvai: 252.
8. D. Alaṅkāram: Potu – Iyal urai : 7.
9. V. Paṭṭiyal : 15.
10. P. Paṭṭiyal : 221.
11. Kaṭṭaḷai-k-Kali: "A kind of kali-t-tuṟai verse of four lines in which every line has the same number of acai." (Tamil lexicon; p. 647).
12. V. Pāṭṭiyal: 13. I. V. Paṭṭiyal : 55 P. Paṭṭiyal : 156.
13. 'மும்மணியா வனசொன்ன புருடராகம் உறுவயிடூ ரியங்கோமே தகமே யென்றுங் கோதுவர்' —திருவாலவாயுடையார் : 25 : 22.

foregoing stanza, should correspond to the beginning of the following stanza and this sort of linking like a circular garland is the essence of 'Antāti' class of poetry, of which this Mummaṇi-k-kōvai is a fitting example.[14]

As Dr. U. Ve. Swaminatha Iyer observes, "that these small poetic treatises, like the one under review, expound good ideas with beautiful words and phrases and create interest in the young minds to study them more intensively when they grow in age and intelligence".[15]

The City of Tiruvārūr—its pristine glory:

Tiruvārūr is an ancient town with pristine glory in the Tanjore district watered by a branch of the cauvery. There is a big Siva temple called 'Pūṅ-koil' and the 'Mūlattāṉam' or the abode of God is praised by Saint Appar in his Tēvāram hymns.[16] Cēntaṉār, posterior to Appar, makes mention of the festivals in the temple and of the intensity of devotion shown by the saints towards Lord Thiyagesa of Tiruvārūr.[17] Cēkkiḻār also, in his 'Periya Purāṇam', 'eulogises the greatness of Tiruvārūr in 'Tiru-nakara-c-ciṟappu'.[18] He says, it is sanctified by the worship of Goddess Lakshmi: and resembles the red—lotus, the seat of Mahalakshmi.[19] The Sthalapuranam of Tiruvārūr extols this city in 'tala-makimaic-carukkam';[20] the Tiruvārūr Ulā follows suit.[21]

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14. Yapparuṅkala virutti: Commentary on the cūttiram No. 53.
15. Foreword to Valivala mummanik-kōvai, p. IV.
16. 'இருங்கனக மதிலாரூர் முலட்டானத் தெழுந்தருளி யிருந்தானை'.
17. 'குழல்ஒலி யாழ்ஒலி குத்தொலி ஏத்தொலி எங்கும் குழாம் பெருகி'
விழவொலி விண்ணளவும் சென்று விம்மி மிகுதிரு ஆரூர்'.
18. P. Purāṇam: Tiru-nakara-c-ciṟappu 1-12.
19. -do- 12.
20. Stanza: 71.
21. மண்ணினை யுண்டுமிழ்ந்த மாயது மாமலர்மேல்
அண்ணலு நண்ணரிய ஆதியை மாதிஞேடும்
திண்ணிய மாமதில்சூழ் தென்திரு வாரூர்புக்
கெண்ணிய கண்குளிர என்றுகொ லெய்துவதே—(திருவாரூர் உலா)

Tiruvārūr is one of the saptavitanka-kshetras ;[22] references to the glory of this city is found in Skanda-purāṇam,[23] Kallatam,[24] and Tiruviḷaiyāṭal-purāṇam.[25] There is also a local saying, proverbial in every home in Tamilnad to the effect—"to see Cidambaram is good; to die in Kāñci or Banaras is welcome; to take birth in Tiruvārūr is praiseworthy, the mere thought of Tiruvannamalai will lead to salvation".[26]

Origin of the work—Its analysis:

Now, coming to the book proper, the 'Tiruvārūr Mummani-k-kōvai' (i.e. Mummaṇi-k-kōvai on Tiruvārūr) was sung by Cēramaṉ Perumāḷ Nāyaṉār, when he went into the temple to worship Thiyagesa, with his friend and co-devotee Cuntaramūrtti Nāyaṉār.

As already mentioned, according to the grammatical canons of a Mummaṇi-k-kōvai, we are having ten Āciriyappās, ten veṇpās and ten kaṭṭoḷai-k-kalitturais, coming in the order specified before.

Of the ten Āciriyappās, the shortest is one, that has 16 lines[27] and the longest[28] is that which has 20. The ten veṇpās and the ten kaṭṭaḷai-k-kalitturais are each of 4 lines. Each stanza in the Mummaṇi-k-kōvai deals both the utterances of any one of the following members of the Aka-p-poruḷ par-lance—viz. the lady-love (heroine),[29] Lady-companion,[30] foster-mother,[31] or the hero,[32] Of

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22. Tiruvārūr, Tirunākai-k-Kārōṇam, Tirunaḷḷāṟu, Tirumaṟai-k-kādu, Tiruk-kāṟāyal, Tiruvāymūr and Tirukkuvaḷai (Apitāṉa Cintāmaṇi) p. 5182.
23. Kumārapuri-p-paṭalam : 81.
24. Stanza : 52.
25. Aruccaṉaip-paṭalam : 17.
26. 'தில்லையைக் காணக் காசியி லிறுக்கச்
சிறக்குமா ரூர்தனிற் பிறக்க
எல்லையி லருண கிரிதனை நினைக்க வெய்தலாமுத்தி'.
27. Stanzas : 7 and 10.
28. -do- 10.
29. -do- 4, 6, 21, 22, 23, 28 and 30.
30. -do- 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27.
31. -do- 13, 15–18.
32. -do- 8 and 29.

the total 30 stanzas, the lady companion has to her credit 16, the heroine 7, the foster-mother 5, and the hero 2. In each stanza, encomiums about the Lord of Tiruvārūr is to be found. Hence, let me give some hints about Lord Siva of Tiruvārūr, at the outset.

Lord Siva of Tiruvārūr—His attributes:

He has checked the ferocity of the Ganges by His matted locks of hair; He has his consort, Parvati on His left half;[33] He has the Bull to ride on;[34] He has three eyes, one in the face;[35] He has granted boons to Arjuna (one of the Pandava heroes)[36] and is beyond the celestial globe;[37] He wears the crescent moon on His head and has poison retained in His throat and visible in the neck.[38] He has burnt the three cities moving along the sky; and thus bedecking Himself with glory.[39] He dances with fire in His hands;[40] He resides in Ārūr[41] and is worshipped by the Devas and the four vedas;[42] He obstructed and foiled the yagna (sacrificial fire) of Thakkan,[43] His own father-in-law and subjugated yama, the God of Death;[44] He wears the snakes as ornaments on His body,[45] with the 'Konral' (cassis-fistula) flowers on His head.[46] He is beyond the ken of the Devas; He is the father of 'Kumara'; He has sounding

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33. T. M. Kōvai: 1–30.
34. -do- 2.
35. -do- 3.
36. -do- 4.
37. -do- 5.
38. -do- 6.
39. -do- 7.
40. -do- 8.
41. -do- 10.
42. -do- 11.
43. -do- 12.
44. -do- 13.
45. -do- 14 and 17.
46. -do- 18.

leg-anklet[47] and has his body completely smeared with holy ashes.[48] He dances during night with fire in His thousand hands and with snakes tied around His waist as belt.[49] He peeled off the skin of an elephant, which came to kill him.[50] He is the Destroyer of the Universe as well as its preserver.[51]

Facets of the work

Description of Nature:

The rainy season has been beautifully described. The clouds became black and began to pour rain on the mountain-peaks; lightning and thunder followed; the rain-bow adorned the sky; the cochineal insect (coccus cocti) began to fly; the 'Kāntal' (gloriosa superba) the Mullai (Jasmine), the 'Koṉṟai' (Cassia fistula) blossomed; the peacocks—began to dance spreading its plumage; the winter wind began to blow.[52]

Lightning is compared to a sword unsheathed; the thunder is compared to the beating of the drum; the rainbow is compared to a hunter's bow and the downpour of rain is compared to the downpour of arrows from the bow; The carissa, gloriosa, and memecylon flowers blossom. The gloriosa resemble the glowing tongues of fire;[53] In the forest and mountainous tracts, peacocks, cattle, and deer play together both male and female.[54] The 'Kurā' tree (Chomelia Asiatica or the common bottle-flower tree) yield flowers resembling the 'pāvais' (which means both toys and girls).[55]

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47. T. M. Kōvai: 19.
48. -do- 22.
49. -do- 23.
50. -do- 28.
51. -do- 29.
52. -do- 1.
53. -do- 4.
54. -do- 3.
55. -do- 16.

The pangs of separation :

The lady-love of the house pines in grief because, her lover has told her, that he will be returning home at the beginning of the rainy season. He has gone on some errand. The lady-love with weeping eyes becomes emaciated; the freckles on her body resembles the Konrai and her sighs resemble the rustlings of winter-wind; her tears dissipated the collyrium in her eyes resemble the heavy downpour of rain;[56] Her bangles begin to fall of their own accord from her forehand; the body becomes pale;[57] she begins to pine in grief for her lover who has gone through dangerous mountainous paths filled with evil spirits and she begins to knead her hands in grief. She begins to chastise her heart for not caring for her and for running after her lover who has absolutely no love for her.[58] She even advises her heart to go to the place where her lover is. Her furtive love becomes the gossip of the village and she grieves with the sea over the separation of her lover, wailing that her lover has not even got the compassion, which the sea showed towards her humble self.[59]

The Distress of the lady-love described :

The Mummaṇi-k-kōvai describes the distress of the lady-love, in more ways than one. Her bangles begin to loosen of their own accord, and slip off her forehand; the body becomes pale; and her eyes shed tears because, according to the parting words of her husband, he must have returned home in his chariot by his time, but he has not done so. She mourns her lot by saying: "Rain has come, but my lover's chariot does not yet appear."[60] The distress of the lady-love is aggrevated by the sight of peacocks, cattle and deer playing together with their mates.[61] Also the plants carissa, the gloriosa, and the memecylon

56. T. M. Kōvai : 7.
57. -do- 6.
58. -do- 7.
59. -do- 30.
60. -do- 2.
61. -do- 3.

with the cochineal flying all around aggravate her distress.[62] Thus, the rainy season has come to make the lady-love miserable.

The lady-love pines in grief, because her lover has gone to earn money and begins to brood over his separation. He has gone through dangerous mountainous paths filled with evil spirits, with only his spear lending light to his way in the darkness. He has to swim across the forest-rivers alone, without anybody's help. The celestial damsels attracted by his personality, mistake him to be 'Gandrava' and they want to embrace him. Brooding in this strain, the lady-love begins to shed tears with heavy sighs, kneading her hands in grief.[63]

At another time, the hero has left her to reside with a prostitute and the lady-love speaks to her heart as follows:— "Oh! heart! you never care for me and run after my husband, who has absolutely no love towards us. You seem to be a dunce. My husband has not even thought about his small child born of us and you run after such a cruel person. You are really a fool".[64]

The part played by the lady-companion :

She consoles the lady-love, by informing her of the arrival of the chariot of her lover. For example, she will say, "In the dead of night, when even birds and ghosts are fast asleep, our lord has come in his chariot; when we think of his sincerity, our hearts melt like the hearts of the devotees of Siva at Tiruvārūr."[65]

She prevents the lover from coming during nights to visit the lady-love warning him of the dangers on the way.[66] By observing the changes[67] in the person of the lady-love, she comes

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62. T. M. Kōvai : 4.
63. -do- 7.
64. -do- 22.
65. -do- 27.
66. -do- 9.
67. The changes observed are : Her matted locks of hair were not combed, the garlands all pulled down ; the 'tilak' on her forehead had become

to the conclusion, furtive love exists between the lover and the lady love.[68] Sometimes she brings home to the lady-love, the intensity of the lover's passion by telling her "that a person resembling Muruga used to come in this field of millets as if he is going to guard it and will never stir out, even if darkness were to set in; he feels shy to give expression to the surging ideas in his mind".[69]

At another time, she accepts the leaf-garments given by the lover as a token of his love towards the lady-love to wear as apparel.[70] Whenever the Pāṇaṉ used to act as intermediary between the hero and heroine to pacify her 'ūṭal' (solkiness due to love-quarrels) she will interfere and chastise the 'Pāṇaṉ' as follows:—"Oh Pāṇa! I know your tricks. This sort of meek submission, begging and supplications will never do with me. The hero whom, you praised so much, is like a mirror and is now in the clutches of the concubines. We would not accept him. Get away".[71] After the hero returns from the prostitute's house, she will address him in a marvellous way to bring him to a sense of discipline, not overriding the canons of decency and respect to be shown towards the hero. She will address him as follows:—"Oh Lord! You please go and shower your grace on those women; you must know that even though there is only one beautiful lotus-flower, blossoming in the midst of a thousand water-lilies, the tank is still called a 'lotus-tank' and not a 'water-lily' tank. Similarly, you must know that to lead a householder's life with your legitimate wife is always praiseworthy and your residing with prostitutes, certainly merits condemnation".[72]

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partly effaced; the collyrium in the eyes became smeared all over and the eyes became red; the face began to sweat, the sandal paste on her breasts had become scattered and the apparel became disturbed.

68. T. M. Kōvai: 10.

69. -do- 11.

70. -do- 12.

71. -do- 19.

72. -do- 24.

The Part played by the foster-mother :

It is customary for the foster-mother always to weep over the elopment of the lady-love with her lover. She says :—"My daughter, who was born in Tiruvārūr and bred up in affluent circumstances left her home following her lover through the hot desert, infested with cruel hunters and hounds ; perhaps, my daughter has become the daughter-in-law of an old lady of the hunter-tribe ".[73]

"My daughter has her face like the moon ; she used to lie by my side in my bed embracing me in sleep, and even if I were to move just a bit, she used to get afraid. Such an innocent docile, delicate girl is able to cross the hot-desert, following her lover. I do not know, how she is able to bear all the sufferings on the way. It is really pitiable ".[74]

Then the foster-mother addresses the 'Kurā' tree (chemelia Asiatica or the common bottle-flower tree) asking it, not to put any hurdles on the path of her daughter, who may just come and stay under its shade. She grieves by saying, that "the desert through which my daughter has to pass seems to be hotter than even the fire emitted by the eye of Lord Siva, when he burnt Cupid, the God of Love. My daughter has to roam about this hot desert like those who do not worship Siva, as a result of which they suffer from acute poverty roaming about in the hot sun in search of patronage".[75]

Akat-tuṟais used in this 'Kōvai' :

(i) 'Vēḻam – Viṉātal' :

This 'tuṟai'[76] is in the form of an interrogation i.e. inquiring whether an elephant had gone that way. The lover puts the

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73. T. M. Kōvai : 13.

74. -do- 15.

75. -do- 16.

76. 'ஊரும் பேரும் கெடுதியும் பிறவும்'

(Tol : Kaḷavu : 11)

'ஊர்பெயர் கெடுதியோ டொழிந்தவும் வினவுழி'

N. Akapporuḷ : Kaḷaviyal : 24.

above question to the lady-love who is guarding the millet field with her lady-companion. This question is put to understand the mind of the lady-love whether she is in love with him.[77]

(ii) 'Āṟu Pār-t-tuṟṟa-accak-kiḷavi':

This 'tuṟai'[78] is in the nature of preventing the lover from coming during nights to visit the lady-love, by warning him of the dangers on the way.[79]

(iii) 'Alla-kuṟi-p-paṭutal':

That is to say, the signs, usually made by her lover during the night to denote his arrival at his usual rendezvous, may happen otherwise also, due to accidental circumstances, and by this the lady-love is misled.[80] In this context, it is stated, that though the people in the village sleep, and though it is midnight as the birds began to chirp at dead of night, the lady-love is not able to come to the rendezevous during night.[81] Similar ideas can be found even in the Tiru-k-kōvaiyār of Maṇikkavācakar.[82]

'Ūṭal' in this Kōvai:

This is the nature of the utterance of the lady-love who is irate with the lover, who came to pacify her.[83] "Oh hero! you

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77. T. M. Kōvai : 8.

78. 'ஆற்றது தீமை அறிவுறு கலக்கமும்'

(Tol : Kaḷavu : 23).

'ஆறுபார்த் துற்ற அச்சக் கிளவியும்'

N. Akapporuḷ : Kaḷaviyal : 48.

79. T. M. Kōvai : 9.

80. 'குறியின் ஒப்புமை மருடற் கண்ணும்'

(Tol : Kaḷavu : 20)

'இறைவிக் கிகுளை யிறைவர வுணர்த்துழித்
தான்குறி மருண்டமை தலைவியவட் குணர்த்தலும்'

N. Akapporuḷ : Kaḷaviyal : 44.

81. T. M. Kōvai : 26.

82. Stanza : 172.

83. "Love-quarrel between husband and wife, arising from zealousy, appropriate to the agricultural tracts."

(Tamil lexicon : p. 493).

need not touch my feet and bow before me; you need not embrace me or disturb my garments. I know, you are an adept in these things, after having trained yourself in the hamlets of concumbines with whom you used to stay."[84]

Similes:

Let us deal with the similes in this Tiruvārūr Mummaṇi-k-Kōvai :-

i) The survey-stone denoting the border of Tiruvārūr is compared to the heart of the hero; (i.e.) the hero is depicted as stone-hearted.[85]

ii) The blackness of the cloud is compared to the black neck of Iswara (the blackness of His neck is due to Halahala poison).[86]

iii) My eyes do not have even a wink of sleep, because I am stricken with grief like those 'agnanis' (ignorant men) who refuse to meditate on Lord Siva of Tiruvārūr, who gave Pasupatha to Arjuna.[87].

iv) The beauty of the heroine is compared to the beauty of Tiruvārūr.[88]

v) The thin waist of the lady-love is compared to a bending delicate plant.[89].

vi) The heat of the desert is compared to the fire emitted by the eye of Siva, when he burnt Cupid, the God of love.[90]

vii) "Like the agnostics, who roam about in the hot sun, my precious daughter has to go through this burning desert accompanying her lover." So says, the foster-mother.[91]

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84. T. M. Kōvai: 26.
85. -do- 1.
86. -do- 3.
87. -do- 4.
88. -do- 6.
89. -do- 14.
90. -do- 17.
91. -do- 18.

viii) The broad eyes of the women smeared with collyrium is compared to the blackened neck of Siva.[92]

ix) The flowing water controlled by the mud-banks is compared to the flow of love controlled by chastity.[93]

x) The poison blackening the neck of Siva is compared to the black serpent 'Kethu' catching hold of the crescent moon; and the gossip in the village about the heroine is compared to the clamorous noise made during festivals in Tiruvārūr.[94]

xi) The melting of the heart of the lady-love, at the arrival of the chariot of her lover at dead of night is compared to the melting of the heart of Saiva devotees.[95].

xii) The sight of the lover has completely brought about a change in the lady-love. This is compared to a drop of oil poured on boiling water, changing the whole surface of the water, at the same time spreading itself.[96]

Conclusion :

Thus the Mummaṇi-k-kōvai contains descriptions of nature, love-themes, similes and lofty ideals. In every stanza, it is evident, that its author is deeply devoted to Siva. In short, one can see in this Mummaṇi-k-kōvai of Tiruvārūr, the depth of ideas generally associated with the songs of the Sangham classics.

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92. T. M. Kōvai : 21.
93. -do- 22.
94. -do- 85.
95. -do- 27.
96. -do- 28.

3. TIRU-K-KAYILĀYA ÑĀN̲A ULĀ

The medieval period in the history of Tamil literature, is strikingly marked by the rise of minor works called, 'Prabandams' like Kōvai, Ulā, Paḷḷu, Paraṇi, Kuṛavañci, Piḷḷai-t-tamiḻ and catakam and these Prabandams are pregnant with celestial meaning and beauty of words and phrases.

Even Tolkāppiyan̲ār, one of the earliest grammarians has included these novel sort of Prabandams under the appellation 'Viruntu'[1] and hence the rise of these new kinds of poetical compositions has the earliest sanction in the Tolkāppiyam itself. The cūttirams numbers 29 and 30 in Poruḷatikāram Puṛattiṇai Iyal refer to the Piḷḷai-t-tamiḻ[2] and Ulā[3] kinds of poesy respectively.

The minor Prabandams are counted as 96 in toto[4], (though scholars differ in respect of the total number, varying from 56 (as per Veṇpā-p-pāṭṭiyal) to 97 (as per Navanīta-p-pāṭṭiyal). There are also other kinds of a lesser variety of poems like Ammān̲ai (a class of poems, each verse of which has ammān̲ai as its refrain), Alaṅkāram (ornaments of melody), cintu (a kind of musical composition), Cīṭṭu-k-Kavi (poems in letter-forms), Ēcal (Tirades or reproaches), Pulampal (Elegies), Temmāṅku (ditties), Vaṇṇam (Rhythmic verses), Villu-p-pāṭṭu (verses to the accompaniment of a bow string) etc., which are not included in the 96

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1. Tol : Poruḷ : Ceyyuḷiyal : 237.
2. 'குழவி மருங்கினும் கிழவ தாகும்'.
3. 'ஊரொடு தோற்றமும் உரித்தென மொழிப'.
4. (1) பிள்ளைக் கவிமுதல் புராணம் ஈருத்
தொண்ணூற் ருறுஎன்னும் தொகை யதாம் —பிரபந்த மரபியல்

(2) பதினறை யாருற் பெருக்கிப் பிரபந்தந்தாதி
பலவகை எடுத்துரைக்கின் —பிரபந்த தீபிகை

(3) தொண்ணூற்ருறு கோலப்ர பந்தங்கள்
—சிவந்தெழுந்த பல்லவராயன் உலா.

kinds and thus, we can conclude, that there is no definite borderline for fixing the varieties of compositions in later days.

The Origin of 'Ulā':

During festivals, it is customary to take the deities from the temples into the streets in procession and people used to throng around on all sides to see and enjoy the beauty of the procession as well as the Lord; and this is called Tiruvīti Ulā or street-processions. We find references to the gorgeous processions of deities in the Tēvāram of Campantar[5] and Appar[6] and even in the Kāppiyams like Peruṅkatai,[7] Cīvakacintāmaṇi[8] and Kamba Ramayanam.[9] Kambar dedicates a separate 'patalam' to the procession of Rama in Mitila, just before his marriage with Sita. In the Muttoḷḷāyiram, we find procession of Cērā, Cōḷā and Pāṇḍiyā rulers described.[10] Thus, it could be seen, that the processions of deities and kings gave rise to the composition of 'Ulā Prabandams'.

The Canons of 'Ulā':

Certain fundamental tenets must be followed in composing a 'Ulā' Prabandam. This is to be written in Kalivenpā metre and it should describe how women of the seven 'makaḷir paruvams'[11] are love-stricken at the sight of the hero as they see him coming along in procession.[12] This is called also as 'Ulāppuṟam',[13]

5. Tēvāram : 1 : 27 : 7 and 1 : 60 : 5.

6. -do- 4 : 21 : 8 ; 4 : 50 : 2; 6 : 96 : 7.

7. Peruṅ : 2 : 7 : 54-62.

8. Cintā : 457.

9. Kambar : Balakandam : Etirkoḷpaṭalam : 34.

10. P. Tiraṭṭu : 1508 (On Cērā); 1507 (On Pāṇḍiyā).

11. Women of the seven age groups : Pētai, Petumpai, Maṅkai, Maṭantai, Arivai, Terivai and Periḷampeṇ.

12. P. Pāṭṭiyal : 214; V. Pāṭṭiyal : Ulā and Kuḷamakan. C. Pāṭṭiyal ; Marapiyal : 37 ; I. V. Pāṭṭiyal : 97 ; Prabhantha-t-tiraṭṭu and Prabhantha Tīpikai : 19.

13. 'கோவை யகம்வைத்து உலாப்புறம் காட்டுதி' —கோடீச்சுரக் கோவை.

'Ulāmālai',[14] 'Bavaṉi'[15] and 'Bavaṉi Ulā'.[16] In Ulā, references can be made also to the recreational plays of the women-folk of various age-groups like Ciṟṟil,[17] Pāvai,[18] Kaḷankāṭal,[19] Ammāṉai-āṭal,[20] Ūcal,[21] teaching their pet parrots, playing on the lyre, bathing in tanks, playing in gardens etc. The hero, on whom this 'Ulā' is to be composed should be between 16 to 48 years of age, as per the dictum given in the Paṉṉirupāṭṭiyal.[22]

The 'Ulā' composition taken as a whole, consists of two parts mainly; the first part is called 'Mutal-nilai'[23] i.e. to say, like a preface, wherein the hero's high pedigree, his valour, victories, rich apparel, dazzling ornaments, coming in procession seated on a decorated elephant, accompanied by high dignitaries, citizens, women-folk of the locality etc. should be mentioned; and in the second part which is called 'Piṉ-eḷu-nilai'[24] we find expressions of the feelings, emotions, actions and psychological effects on the Women-folk of the seven age-groups, they being stricken with love at the sight of the hero, coming in procession on the elephant.

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14. 'ஏர்கொண்ட தென்னிலஞ்சி ஈசன் குருபரன்மேல்
சீர் கொண்டு உலாமாலை சேர்க்கவே'
—திருவிலஞ்சி முருகன் உலா: காப்புச்செய்யுள்

15. 'பவனித் திருத்தேரைப் பாரீர்' —திருக்கழுக்குன்றத்து உலா: *129.*

16. 'பொற் கழுக்குன் றீசர்பவனித் திருவுலாப் பாட'
—திருக்கழுக்குன்றத்து உலா: காப்புச் செய்யுள்.

17. Toy-house of sand built by little girls in play.

18. Play with dolls.

19. Playing with Molucca beans.

20. Playing with coloured balls.

21. Swinging.

22. 'நீடிய நாற்பத் தெட்டி னளவும்
ஆடவர்க் குலாப்புற முரித்தென மொழிப'—பன்னிரு பாட்டியல் : *136.*

23. P. Pāṭṭiyal : 133.

24. P. Pāṭṭiyal : 135.

Pura-p-poruḷ and Ulā :

This Ulā is to be classified under Pura-p-poruḷ though 'Akatturais' may be found in it, because there is no reciprocity of love in the hero towards the seven kinds of women, (as per age-groups) who fall in love with him, in various degrees of magnitude. Further, it is only one-sided love, as we find the seven kinds of women falling in love with him and hence this comes under 'Peṇpāṛ-kaikkiḷai'. So far as Ulā on Gods is concerned, it comes under the 'turai' 'Kaṭavuḷmāṭṭu māṉiṭap-peṇṭir nayanta pakkam'[25] i.e. women falling in love with God.

According to the Ulā, the seven kinds of women of various age groups are classified as follows, with their instincts and emotions depicted also in a general way:—

(1)	Pētai[26]—age 5 to 7	: Not much of experience of love.
(2)	Petumpai[27]—age 8 to 11	: Something of a love feeling budding but not fully understood.
(3)	Maṅkai[28]—age 12 to 13	: Feeling of 'what love is' clearly experienced.
(4)	Maṭantai[29]—age 14 to 19	: Wallowing in such experi-ences often.
(5)	Arivai[30]—age 20 to 25	: Having sexual bliss as experience.
(6)	Terivai[31]—age 26 to 31	: Experiencing a desire for the stages of pregnancy i.e. Motherhood.
(7)	Pēriḷampeṇ[32]—age 32 to 40	: Waning in sexual desire.

25. P. V. mālai : Pāṭāṉ Paṭalam : 49.
26. I. V. Pāṭṭiyal : 99.
27. -do- 100.
28. -do- 101.
29. -do- 102.
30. -do- 102.
31. -do- 103.
32. -do- 103.

These women-groups described in the 'Ulā' depict, only the prostitute and they should not be applied to chaste women.[33]

Titles of 'Ulā' Prabandam:

Ulā Prabandams are generally named after the place (to which it refers), the hero, or both. For example, Tiruvārūr Ulā, Aviṉaci Ulā, Tiruppaṉantal Ulā, Tēvai Ulā, Pērūr Ulā are all named after places, to which they refer. Vikrama Cōlaṉ Ulā, Kulōttuṅka Cōlaṉ Ulā, Rajaraja Cōlaṉ Ulā, Ēkāmparanātar Ulā are all named after the heroes or deities, to which they refer. Madurai Cokkanātar Ulā, Tañcai-p-peruvuṭaiyār Ulā, Tiru Ilañci Murugan Ulā, Kuṉṛakkudi Caṇmukanātar Ulā, Kayat-taṛṛaracaṉ Ulā are named after both place—names and hero combined.

Thus we find that the Ulās are on deities, kings or patrons who have made generous gifts. Now, Cēramāṉ Perumāḷ Nāyaṉār's Tiru-k-kayilāya Ñāṉa Ulā belongs to the first category.

Tiru-k-kayilāya Ñāṉa Ulā:

This Ulā is the first of its kind and hence it is popularly known as 'Āti Ulā'. Aruṇakirinātar in his Tiruppukaḷ makes mention of this 'appellation' Āti Ulā[34] because Lord Siva is the 'Āti' or primordial source for all the creations found in this

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33. (i) 'பக்குநின்ற காமம் ஊரில் பொதுமகளிரொடு கூடிவந்த விளக்கமும் பாடாண்திணைக்கு உரியது'
– Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar's commentary on the Cūttiram
"ஊரொடு தோற்றமும் உரித்தென மொழிப"
(Tol : Poruḷ : Puṛattiṇai-iyal : 30)

(ii) Peruṅ : 2 : 7 : 54–62.

34. Tiruppukaḷ : 104.

" ஆத ரம்பயில் ஆரூரர் தோழமை
சேர்தல் கொண்டவ ரோடேமு ளினின்
ஆடல் வெம்பரி மீதேறி மாகயி லையில் ஏகி
ஆதி அந்தஉ லாஆசு பாடிய
சேரர் கொங்குவை காவூர் நருடதில்
ஆவி னன்குடி வாழ்வான தேவர்கள் பெருமாளே "

Universe and because this 'Ulā' deals with such a Lord, it is befittingly called 'Āti Ulā'. Further, as it catalogues the incidents associated with the procession of Lord Siva at Tiru-k-kayilāyam (i.e. the famous Kayilas) and as inner core is 'the attainment of ñāṉa' (or knowledge of the Supreme), it is titled 'Tiru-k-kayilāya Ñāṉa Ulā'. Besides, it is said to have been recited before Lord Siva at Tiru-k-kayilāyam by its author, Cēramāṉ Perumāḷ Nāyaṉār for which service, the Lord was pleased to offer him the headship of the 'Siva ganas'. This bestows an added dignity on the book.[35] Cēkkiḻar in his Periyapurāṇam names this Ulā as 'Tiru-Ulāppuṟam.[36] Iraṭṭaiyar, in their Ēkāmparanātar Ulā, refers to this 'Āti Ulā' in devotion.[37] More than all these, this Ñāṉa Ulā is included in the Eleventh Tirumuṟai of the Saivite literary cannons. The task of propounding this Ulā on earth, has devolved on 'Maha-sastha' and he descended into this world from Kayilāyam and released this 'Ulā' from Tiruppiṭavūr for the benefit of humanity.[38]

The Text and its meaningful contents:

Introduction: This Ulā contains 197 'Kaṇṇis'.[39] At the outset the greatness of Lord Siva is succinctly brought forward. He is glorified as 'one who has no birth, who possesses Supreme knowledge, who renounced this world living in this world itself,

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35. P. Purāṇam : Veḷḷāṉai–c–carukkam : 47 and Tiruppukaḻ : 104 ; Tiruppūvaṇa Nātar ulā : 227.

36. "பெருகு வேதமும் முனிவரும்
துதிப்பரும் பெருமையாய் உனைஅன்பால்
திருவு லாப்புறம் பாடினேன்"
—பெரியபுராணம்; வெள்ளானைச் சுருக்கம்:47.

37. (1) ...."வழுத்தி னர்க்குப்
போத வினியதொரு பொன்வண்ணத் தந்தாதி
ஆதி யுலாவோ டமைத்தோனும்"
(2) சேரன், உலாவுடையான் போந்தான் உலா.

38. Mahavidvan M. Raghava Ayyangar; Cēra Vēntar Ceyyuṭ Kōvai Part II: p. 137.

39. A "Kaṇṇi" is of two lines each of four foot (or cir) with 'Veṇṭaḷai' coupling.

who is the Creator in the form of Brahma, Preserver in the form of Hari and Destroyer in the form of Hara, and who resides in the hearts of devotees to shower grace on them by taking that form which they meditate upon'.[40]

The Procession of Siva at Kayilas-its start:

Siva was seated on a throne in his capital city of Sivapura in Sivaloga and the Devas approached him for His 'dharsan'. He consented to give 'dharsan' and began to bedeck Himself for the purpose. Parvati, His consort, rendered her help in adorning Him. Siva wore the wreath given by Cupid on the head, smeared the incensed sandal paste prepared by the elite damsels on His chest, wore the anklets on the knee-ankles and a crown on His head; He put on the 'Makara Kuṇṭalams'[41] on His ears; the 'Kaṇṭikai' made of diamonds on His chest, and also gold chains and garlands indicative of victory. He put on, the 'Kēyūram' on the shoulder-blades, belt on His waist, and the Vedas as His foot-wear; he came out of the first gate-way, guarded by His sentinels Nandideva and Mākaḷar. At that time the Ashta Vasus and the sages blessed Him; the 'Dwadasa Adhittar wished Him eternity; Agasthya played on the lyre; Agni (The Fire—God) carried the incense-vessel and Yama (the God of Death) showered benedictions. Niruthi and others bore the dazzling plates and ornaments; Varuna carried the 'Mangala Kalasa'[42] and Vayu (the Wind God) kept the roads clean; the clouds sprinkled rain making the roadways cool, the Moon held aloft the umbrella. Easanan carried the betel-pouch; the Asvani Devas chanted mantras, and the Ekadasa-Rudras sang eulogies about Him; Kubera lavished charity on all the people thronging the two sides of the streets; the river-deities Ganga, Yamuna and others fanned with the 'Chamara' or whisk: the Astha Maha Nagas acted as torch-bearers; and the Astha-diggajas stood bowing before the Lord. The clouds, the lightning and the thunder provided the canopy, the banners and the beat-drums

40. T. N. Ulā : Kaṇṇis : 2–8.

41. An ear-ornament resembling a fish.

42. A pot full of water, denoting prosperity.

respectively. Tumburu and Narada sang celestial songs. The celestial damsels Arambai, Urvasi, Menakai, and Tilottamai performed dances. The 'Bhoodhaganas' acted as guards and volunteers. With all this grandeur paraphernalia intact, the Lord mounted His white Bull (Rishaba), crossed the seven portals of His palace royal, to enter into the main street.[43] Thus started the gorgeous procession in the Street.

Muruga, the Commander-in-chief of the Devas piloted the procession mounted on his peacock. Indra, the King of the Devas, went behind him mounted on the elephant 'Iravadha'. Brahma came on the right side seated on his Swan. Tirumāl came on the left side seated on his Garuda bird. Cupid went in front, even ahead of Muruga, carrying ornamental banners. Sattanar came mounted on his horse. Vinayaka walked slowly. 'Koṟṟavai' also joined the procession seated on her lion, and the 'Saptamatars' (seven Kaṉṉikais) escorted her. All the Eighteen Deva Ganas accompanied the procession crowding them-selves in all directions. All sorts of musical instruments – drums, trumpets, bugles, pipes etc. sounded a variety of notes; the minstrels sang and bowed in obeisance; the wrestlers and attendants made mimicry and chuckling and all these filled the hearts of onlookers with joy; Deities associated with the Six-paruvams, Yogams, Tapas, Mudras, Mantras, Kalap-pramanas and Trigunas accompanied the crowd with Vālakiliyar[44] closely on their steps behind them. In this gorgeous manner, Lord Siva passed on in procession 'as if to capture the hearts of the womenfolk' who came to see Him.[45]

Portrayal of the multitude – its conditions and actions:

The ladies of Sivapura ranging from various age-groups of Pētai to Pēriḷampeṇ heard the sound beats of the drum. Some of them thronged on all the balconies and vantage points of the big lofty buildings on both sides of the street, bedecking them-

43. T. Ñ. Ulā : Kaṇṇis : 9–35.

44. Vālakiliyar is a class of Rishis of the size of a thumb.

45. T. Ñ. Ulā : Kaṇṇis : 36–58.

selves with various dazzling ornaments. Some others stood dazed stricken with love; some prayed for the 'Konrai' (cassia fistula) the garland of Siva; some mistook him for Cupid and immersed themselves in his beauty; some of them became so much confused that they began to wear one ornament for the other; some put collyrium only for one eye and began to run towards the street; some mistook their reflection in the mirror for their own selves and began to paint the feet of their image with red-cotton dye. Some mistook the balls in their hand for parrots and began to teach them.[46] But, all of them became intoxicated with love and passion of various degrees according to their maturity. And I shall now deal with the various age-groups.

Instinctive playful tendencies found in the women of the seven-age-groups according to their growth and maturity:

The 'Pētai' played the part of a kitchen-maid in preparing breakfast and used the white sands as rice.[47] She was playing with dolls made of wood.[48] This is an age, when she had not yet attained perfect maidenhood and hence not in a position to realise the attraction of the opposite sex.[49] The 'Petumpai' in the next age-group, was engaged in drawing a picture of Cupid, the God of Love, surrounded by her lady-companions.[50] She was just then experiencing something of the tendrils of love.[51] The 'Maṅkai' in the next age-group was teaching her pet bird 'mynā' keeping it on her lap, after just releasing it from its golden cage.[52] This is an age, when beauty assumes to take a good shape.[53] The 'Maṭantai' in the next age-group, on a decorated dais, surrounded by her lady-companions was playing on the lyre singing a song on Siva known as 'Maṭal Vaṇṇam' in

46. T. Ñ. Ulā: 59-75.
47. -do- 76.
48. -do- 83.
49. -do- 77-80.
50. -do- 95-96.
51. -do- 98-99.
52. -do- 106.
53. -do- 105.

Cikamaram Paṇ i.e. in the Raga (tune) Nadanamakriya of the Carnatic music scale. She was sweet as the Tamil language rounded in perfection.[54] The 'Arivai' in the next age-group took her lyre in her hand and began to sing amatory songs on the Lord.[55] She had all the aspects of beauty personified in her frame and in short, she resembled the goddess Lakshimi.[56] The 'Terivai' in the next age group, was playing dice on a silver-board, seated amongst her lady-companions.[57] She resembled, in general, the sweet nectar.[58] The 'Pēriḷampeṇ' in the next age-group was singing a 'Veṇpā' on Lord Siva.[59] She was capable of yielding pleasure to all the five senses at a time and in short, she was a paragon.[60]

Reaction on the attitude of the women of the seven age-groups, at the sight of the hero, Lord Siva in procession :

The 'Pētai' seeing Lord Siva coming on the Bull, took him as God and not as one of her own kith and kin as mentioned by her mother. As she was only a child of five to seven years of age, she was able to see only Godhood in Him.[61]

The 'Petumpai' seeing Siva, coming in procession on His Bull, lost all her shyness and self-consciousness and became pale with love ; her bangles loosened and were about to fall from her wrists; her garments began to slip off while she stood gazing at Him, not knowing what to do.[62]

The 'Maṅkai' seeing Siva in procession was attracted by the beauty of His physical frame as well as by the beauty of His garlands and began to sigh deeply, being overpowered by the

54. T. Ñ. Ulā : 123-124.
55. -do- 141-142.
56. -do- 133-140.
57. -do- 166.
58. -do- 149.
59. -do- 189-190.
60. -do- 173-174.
61. -do- 84-85.
62. -do- 97-99.

pangs of love: Casting aside all shyness, her heart began to melt and she stood breathing heavily, immersed in passionate love for Him.[63]

The 'Maṭantai' heard the sound of the bell tied around the neck of the Bull, on which, Siva was riding, and came out of her house to see Him. Captivated by the beauty of His chest, she wanted to embrace Him, but that was not possible. Hence with tears rolling down her cheeks, and shyness having gone with the winds, she embraced her own self and stood weeping.[64]

The 'Arivai' seeing Siva in procession, was overpowered by an intense longing for Him, and began to act like a maniac, by untying her tresses and again tying them, by letting her garments slip off and then setting them right besides her corset too. Thus struck by an overflowing passion for Him, she stood stupefied, unmindful of her garments slipping off her body. Thus, she lost all sense of propriety.[65]

The 'Terivai' seeing the 'Jatamakudam' (the crown of matted locks of hair) of Siva, contracted such a longing for His 'Koṉṟai' (cassie fistula) garland that pining over it, she lost all her sense of maidenhood.[66]

The 'Pēriḷampeṉ' was singing a 'veṇpā' about Lord Siva, and as soon as she saw Him, coming in procession, she cried out 'Oh! Lord! you have come to take away my bangles and to bestow on me love-sickness. Is this proper on your part to do so?' She stood weeping thus and the procession passed on in the street.[67]

Description of the women of the seven age-groups and their instinctive tendency to beautify themselves:

The 'Pētai' has just now passed her infant stage and hence not in a position to realise the attraction of the opposite sex.

63. T. Ṅ. Ula: 107-111.
64. -do- 125-132.
65. -do- 142-148.
66. -do- 167-171.
67. -do- 192-196.

Hence, she is not much interested in decorating her physical frame and her interests are centred on her doll-play.[68]

The 'Petumpai' struts like a peacock; her face is radiant like the moon and lotus flower; her eyes resembled the 'kenṭai' fish and her lips were purple like the fruit of the 'kovvai' creeper (coccinia indica); her teeth shone like pearls and her eyebrows were curved like the bow. She was wearing ear-jewels, and bangles; anklets were sounding on her ankles and she was dressed in beautiful attire. Sandal paste was smeared on her breasts and her personality enticing and very pleasing to look at. Her locks of hair were adorned with flowers and her words were as sweet as those of a parrot. She painted collyrium on her eyes and wore ornaments on her neck, shoulders and fingers.[69]

The 'Maṅkai' is beautiful and the involution of her navel resembles the whirl of the Ganga. Her hands, feet, breasts and face resemble the lotus-flowers. Her waist resembles the creeper, her shoulders the tender bamboos, her sides the central seating place of the chariot, her tresses the streaks of black-sand, her lips the coral and her teeth the pearls. She was bedecked with ornaments.[70]

The 'Maṭantai' was wearing a pearl-necklace with other ornaments adorning her. She had perfumes smeared all over her body and she was dressed in silk attire.[71]

The 'Arivai' had all the aspects of beauty personified in her frame. As the apparel oft. proclaims the person, she wore a jewelled girdle around her waists, a 'cūṭakam' on her forehand, a gold pendent on her head, pearl-necklaces on her neck, and anklets on her ankles.[72]

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68. T. Ṉ. Ulā: 77–83.
69. -do- 86–94.
70. -do- 100–105.
71. -do- 119–122.
72. -do- 137–140.

The 'Terivai' resembled the four time-units in a day as well as the two seasons in a year. This is to say: She resembled the dawn with her sweet-soft words; the moon by kindling passionate love in youths; the eve by the red complexion of her feet and hands; and the night by making it bright by her moon-like countenance. She resembled the rainy season (Kār-p-paruvam) in that her breasts swelled like the rain-bearing clouds and her waist shone like lightning; she resembled the spring season (Iḷavēṉil paruvam) in that her body had the complexion of the tender mango leaves and her lips the redness of the 'Murukkam' flowers (Erythrina indica).[73] She was bedecked in all sorts of ornaments, from head to foot.[74]

The 'Pēriḷampeṇ' is a paragon and is capable of yielding pleasure to all the five senses at a time. Her nails shone like mirrors; her waist was as delicate as a creeper. Her breasts, spread with golden spots on the skin, resembled golden vessels, torturing those who looked at them. Her hands were like the 'Kāntal' (Gloriosa superba). In short, she was very beautiful like Radhi, the wife of Cupid.[75] Even saints will lose themselves in her beauty.[76] Her body was completely incensed and her lady-companions were lauding her.[77]

Fine aspects in the Text:

Indebtedness to Tirumuṟaikaḷ:

At the outset of the prabandam, the author depicts the unparalleled greatness of Lord Siva in sixteen lines (8 Kaṇṇis)[78] in an oxymoron vein and they echo the ideas found in the Tirumuṟais, especially the Tēvāram and Tiruvācakam. Next, we

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73. This is only on the advent of the spring season that we find a mango leaves tender with a light red colour and the 'Kalyāṇa murukkam' flowers blossoming red.

74. T. Ñ. Ulā: Kaṇṇis: 149–162.

75. -do- 172–179.

76. -do- 181.

77. -do- 187.

78. -do- 1–8.

find the capital city of Sivapura so beautifully described that we feel, as if we are transported to that city itself.

Indebtedness to Tirukkuṟaḷ :

When dealing with 'Arivai' and 'Pēriḷampeṉ' the following couplets of Tirukkuṟaḷ have been used verbatum respectively. The couplets are :

Illārai ellārum eḷḷuvar celvarai
Ellārum ceyvar ciṟappu.[79]
Kaṇṭukēṭ ṭuṇṭuyirt tuṟṟariyu maimpulaṉum
Oṇṭoṭi kaṇṇē yuḷa.[80]

The meaning of the first couplet is :–That those who have no wealth or riches are always despised at and the rich are always held in high esteem by the generosity of mankind. Understanding the truth of this couplet, the 'Arivai' began to bedeck herself with valuable ornaments so that she may appear rich to be held in high esteem.[81]

The meaning of the second couplet is :–"that my lady-love possesses the capacity to render conjugal pleasure to all my five senses" (so says the hero). The Pēriḷampeṉ in this context, possesses similarly the capacity to render conjugal pleasure to all the five sensory organs.[82] Thus she is a perfection of womanhood. The choice usage of these couplets, at the proper place in the 'Ulā' by the author is to be appreciated.

Descriptive acumen :

The progress of the procession, the street-scenes, the description of the women of various age-groups,[83] the allegorical treatment of the sexual union[84] – all need approbation.

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79. Kuṟaḷ : 752.
80. -do- 1101.
81. T. Ñ. Ula : Kaṇṇi : 136.
82. -do- 173.
83. This is already dealt with in detail before.
84. T. Ñ. Ula : Kaṇṇis 62–65.

Conclusion :

The use of choice words with grace and rhythm, the manifestation of physical expression of the emotions in the 'Arivai'[85] and the exact delineation of the inner feelings in the hearts of women of various age-groups – all reveal the author's genius. The author's attachment to the Tamil language is evident, when he describes the 'Maṭantai' as 'a divine embodiment of the sweet Tamil language'[86] and his devotion towards Lord Siva is evident in the 'Veṇpā' said to be quoted by Pēriḷampeṇ during her song.[87] Thus it is befitting to term this, as 'Ñāṉa Ulā' and it contains richness of matter and intensity of devotion throughout.

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85. T. Ñ. Ula : Kaṉṉis 146–148.
86. -do- 112 'தீந்தமிழின் தெய்வ வடிவாள்'.
87. -do- 188–190.

4. TĒVĀRAM HYMNS OF CUNTARAMURTTI NĀYANĀR

Saint Cuntaramūrtti Nāyaṉār, the last of the three Saiva Saints whose sweet devotional hymns have enriched the Tamil literature considerably was born of Adi Saiva parents in Tirunāvalūr, a petty village in the present South Arcot District of Tamil Nadu. His father was Caṭaiyaṉār and his mother Icai-ñāṉiyār. He was also called 'Vaṉroṇṭar' 'Tampirāṉ Tōḷar' and 'Cuntarar', but the name, by which he was called by his parents was 'Nampi Ārūraṉ'. The Tēvāram hymns sung by Cuntarar constitute the seventh of the twelve Tirumuṟais. Scholars are of the opinion that he lived in between the eighth and ninth centuries.[1]

Saint Cuntaramūrtti married Paravaiyār, a temple danseuse of Tiruvārūr and Caṅkiliyār, a Vēḷala maiden of Tiruvoṟṟiyūr. He entered into a lasting friendship with Cēramāṉ Perumāḷ, a Cērā King. He lost his eye sight for breaking his plighted word to Caṅkiliyār who was a favoured devotee of Siva. But he regained it by singing sweet hymns in praise of Lord Siva.

The spiritual relationship that developed between Cuntarar and Siva is said to have been of friendly type. His devotion towards Siva was so great that he could get him to run even odd errands for him.

The saint is credited with many miracles, the most spectacular and thrilling among them being his feat of bringing back to life a Brahmin boy eaten by crocodle several years before at Aviṉāci, a town in Coimbatore District, after singing an invocatory hymn on Aviṉāciyappar, the presiding deity of the place.

Cuntarar visited his friend Cēramāṉ Perumāḷ twice; and on both the occasions a most affectionate and a royal welcome was accorded to him. One of the Tēvāra-patikams of the Saint,

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1. Thiru K. S. Srinivasa Pillai; Tamil Varalāṟu: pp. 69–71.

relates to the presiding deity of Tiruvañcai-k-kaḷam, a temple in Makōtai on the west Coast of India. In this song, he prays to Siva for granting him immediate release from worldly bondage.[2] His description of Siva contained in this patikam is in faithful agreement with traditional one furnished in the Saiva Puranas.

Cuntarar passionately states, that Siva will be always present before any one whose devotion to Him is unswerving and that He is the god of all gods, and the chief of all Devas.[3] He is in the souls of the elements; He is abiding with them and, at the same time He stands away from His creation. In these characteristics He is compared by Cuntarar to the function of the first vowel A (அ) among the alphabets.[4]

Siva is the source of all wealth and welfare and of wisdom. Steady and intense devotion to His should render a person worthy and cultured and procure for him freedom from the shackle of births and deaths.[5]

Cuntarar declares, that he has detached himself completely free from the mundane possessions and claims. He addresses Siva as his 'father' and praises the beauty of His form and His compassion for the ailing souls and appeals for admitting him (Cuntarar) into His Divine Grace.[6]

References to Makōtai and Tiruvañcai-k-kaḷam:

Makōtai, hallowed by its Siva temple Tiruvañcai-k-kaḷam is washed by the western sea rolling and breaking on the coast. The temple itself is set in sylvan surroundings strewn with the Valampuri clanks washed ashore by the surging surfs of the sea.[7]

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2. Cuntarar Tēvāram : 4 : 8.
3. -do- 4 : 3.
4. -do- 4 : 4.
5. -do- 4 ; 3.
6. -do- 4 : 8.
7. -do- 4 : 1-10.

Vessels laden with gold and silver, precious gems and valuable merchandise sail gracefully along the coastline past Makōtai.[8]

Moral teaching of the Saint :

In one of his hymns, Saint Cuntarar emphasises, that killing would hinder spiritual progress.[9]

Saint Cuntarar and the Jains :

Cuntarar has made one thrust against the Jains in his song. He has called them, men of dark hearts and people who drank gruel looked like grim gibbets[10]

References to other Gods :

Cuntaramūrtti Nāyaṉār has mentioned Pārvati,[11] Tirumāl[12] and Brahma[13] in his songs. Of course, as all the other Saiva Saints he does not fail to glorify Siva as one, whose stature rose beyond the capacity of the egoistic Tirumāḷ and Brahma to measure and assess.[14]

Siva should be worshipped in all humility with the offerings of fresh flowers and recitation of scriptural hymns sung in His praise.[15]

Saint Cuntaramūrtti's connection with Cērā country is brief but it has achieved a distinction as it was from there that the Saint along with Cēramāṉ Perumāḷ rose to eternal regions for attainment of salvation at the feet of the Lord of Kailāya.

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8. Cuntarar Tēvāram : 4 : 7.
9. -do- 44 : 3.
10. -do- 44 : 9.
11. -do- 4 : 5; 44 : 2; 44 : 5.
12. -do- 4 : 9; 44 : 8.
13. -do- 4 : 9; 44 : 8.
14. -do- 44 : 8.
15. -do- 44 : 6.

5. TIRUVICAIPPĀ BY VĒṆAṬṬAṬIKAḶ

The devotional poetry in Tamil relating to Saivism produced between the 7th and 12th centuries A.D. has been classified into twelve parts called 'Tirumuṟais'. The ninth group includes two categories of composition, one called Tiruvicaippā and the other Tiruppallāṇṭu. Tiruvicaippā comprises of compositions by Tirumālikai-t-Tēvar, Cēntaṉār, Karuvūr-Tēvar, Pūnturutti Kāṭavanampi, Kaṇṭṭarātittar, Vēṇāṭṭaṭikaḷ, Tiruvāliyamutaṉār, Puruṭōttama Nampi and Cētirāyar. Tiruppallāṇṭu was sung by Cēntaṉār. Vēṇāṭṭaṭikaḷ has to his credit one composition in Tiruvicaippā relating to Chidambaram. Most of the songs included in this group, are in praise of this holy place. Vēṇāṭṭaṭikaḷ's song consists of ten verses.

The kings of South Travancore were called, Vēṇāṭṭaṭikaḷ. 'Vēṉāṭṭāṭikaḷ Vīrakērala Ravi Varmaṉ',[1] 'Tiruvēṇāṭṭaṭikaḷ Vīra Rāmaṉ Kērala Varmaṉ'[2] are familiar names occurring in the history of that country. We have every reason to believe that Vēṇāṭṭaṭikaḷ should have been one of the royal personages of Travancore.[3]

Vēṇāṭṭaṭikaḷ hails in his Tiruvicaippā Lord Nataraja who performs the Ananda Tandava, the eternal dance of bliss in the hall of wisdom as the ultimate refuge for the ailing souls and as the eager recipient of the homage of His devotees. He begs for the Grace of Nataraja, that he may remember Him at the time of his death.[4] He employs a homely and impressive simile in his invocation to the Cosmic Dancer. The tendsr unripe banana fruit and the tender 'Kaṟivēppilai' (Murraya Koenegii)

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1. TAS volume I p. 384.
2. -do- VI p. 63.
3. Thiru M. Raghava Ayyankar; Cērā Vēntar Ceyyuḷ-kōvai p. 165.
4. Tiruvicaippā : Koil 9.

leaves, though bitter in taste are yet in great demand as delicacies in cooking. Similarly, Nataraja would appreciate the devotion and service of the poet though of poor character and lacking in sincerity.[5] The poet has employed a number of proverbs to illustrate the theme of his song.[6]

Many words and phrases handled by Vēṇāṭṭaṭikaḷ are suggestive of the deep draughts he has had at the founts of the devotional literature like Tēvāram and Tiruvācakam.

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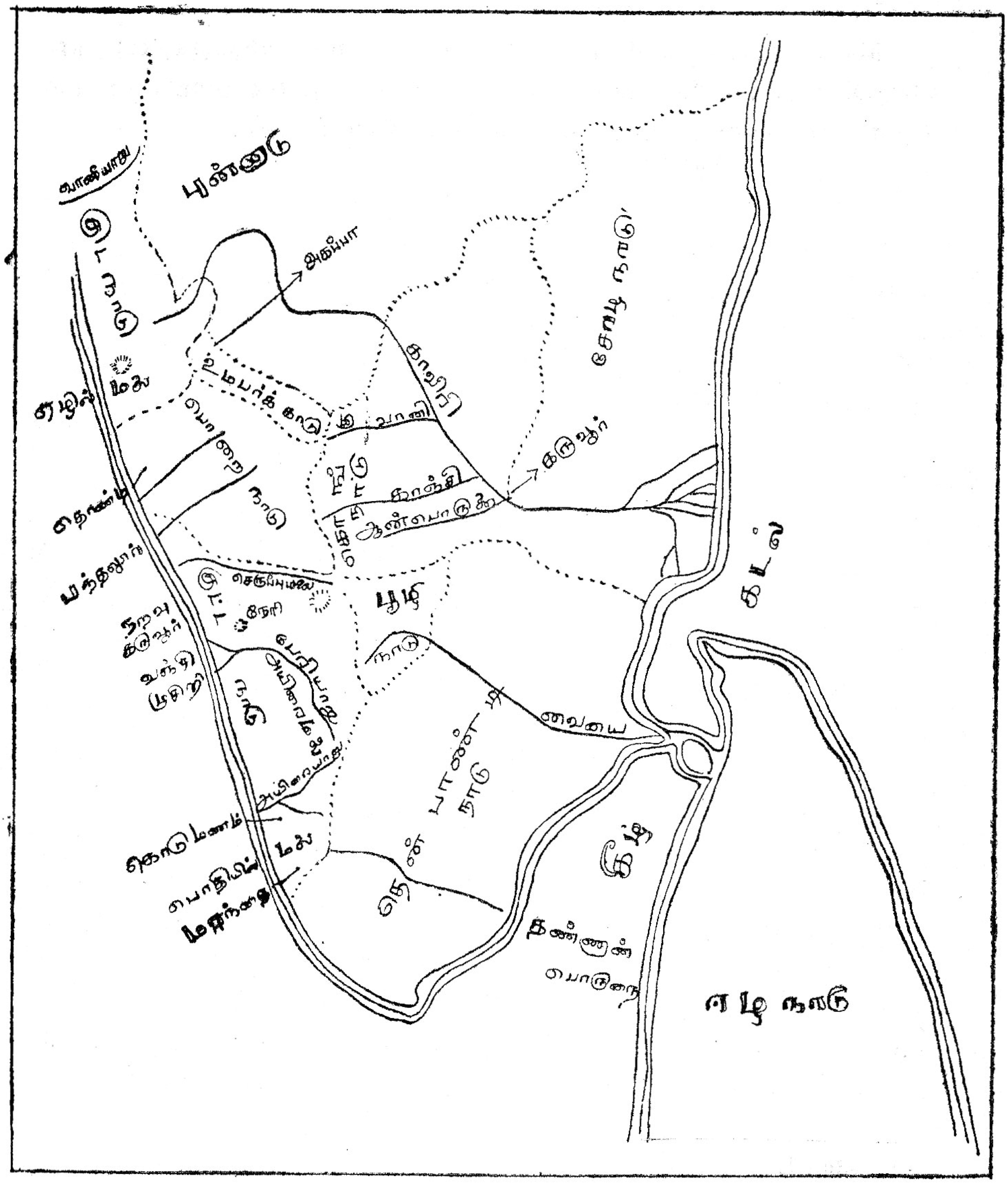
5. -do- 1.

6, (i) 'தம்பானை சாய்ப்பற்றார் என்னும் முதுசொல்லும்' (2:1)

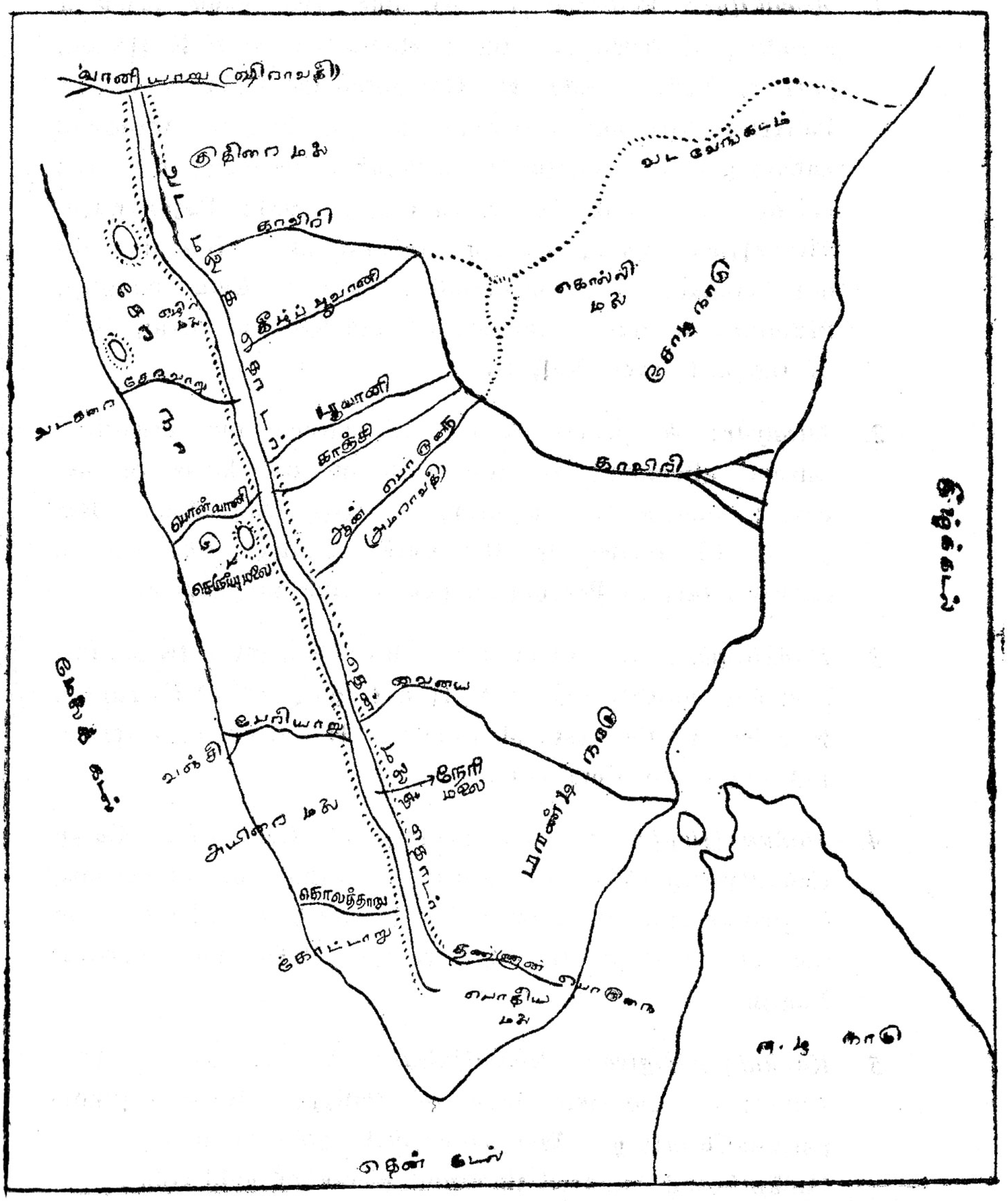
(ii) 'பொசியாதோ கீழ்க்கொம்பு நிறைகுளமென்றதுபோல (31):

(iii) 'இடுவது புல் ஓறெருதுக்(கு) ஒன்றினுக்கு வையிடுதல்' (63):

பதிற்றுப்பத்துக் காட்டும் சேர நாடு



சேரநாட்டு மலைகளும் ஆறுகளும்



APPENDIX—I

Poets who have sung on Cērā Country:

1. *Aricilkiḷār*: Belonged to Ariyalūr, the name being a variation of Aricil, on the northern banks of Koḷḷidam, born of Vellala caste, He Composed the eighth decad of Patiṟṟu-p-pattu and was rewarded nine hundred thousand kānam gold by Takaṭūr-eṟinta-Peruñcēral—Irumpoṟai. His poems are included in Kuṟuntokai, (193); Puṟanāṉūṟu, Tiruvaḷḷuva mālai, Takaṭūr yāttirai also. But they do not contain any information about Cērā country. Presumed to have belonged to the age of Pēkaṉ, one of the last seven Vaḷḷaḷs.

2. *Auvaiyār*: A poetess who had earned the attention, esteem, affection and friendship of the kings of her times; was a contemporary of Atiyamāṉ Añci. Her poem 367 relates to the Cērā country. She was a contemporary of Paraṇar, a poet of the Sangham age.

3. *Iḷaṅkiraṉār*: An identity has been sought between this poet and another known as Iḷaṅkiraṉār, son of Eyiṉantai. Belonged to the caste of hunters, His poem in Naṟṟinai 113 relates to Cērā country.

4. *Iḷaṅkō-Aṭikaḷ*: Younger brother of Cērā king, Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ Was an ascetic. Author of great epic Cilapatikāram. It is generally believed, that he lived in the later half of the 2nd century A.D. and followed Jainism.

5. *Kākkai-p-pāṭiṉiyār Nacceḷḷaiyār*: A famous poetess. Author of the sixth decad of Patiṟṟuppattu on Āṭukōṭ-pāṭṭu-c-Cēralātaṉ. Was rewarded gold weighing nine 'tulām' and hundred thousand pieces of gold coins.

6. *Kapilar*: Antanar by caste. Author of the third hundred poems on 'Kuṟiñci' included in Aiṅkuṟunūṟu, and the

seventh decad of Patirrppattu. Was rewarded for the later work, one hundred thousand Kāṇam gold and extensive lands by Cēramāṉ Celva-k-kaṭuṅkō Vāḷiyātaṉ. Stanzas 8 and 9 of Puranāṉūṟu written by him relate to Cērā country.

7. *Kāppiyāṟṟu-k-Kāpiyaṉār*: Author of the fourth decad of Patirruppattu on Kalaṅkāykkaṇṇi Nārmuṭi-c-Cēral. Was rewarded by the king, forty hundred thousand pieces of gold and a portion of his territory. Belonged to the Sangham Age.

8. *Kōṉāṭṭu Eṟiccilūr Māṭalaṉ Madurai-k-Kumaraṉār*: Has sung on Cēraṉ Kuṭṭuvaṉ Kōtai, Cōlaṉ Iḷavantikai-p-paḷḷi-t-tuñciya Nalaṅkiḷḷi Cēṭ Ceṉṉi, Ēṉāti Tirukiḷḷi, Īrntūr Kiḻār Tōyaṉ Māṟaṉ, Cōlaṉ Kurāp-paḷḷi-t-tuñciya Peruntirumāvaḷavaṉ and Coḻiya Ēṉāti Tirukkuṭṭuvaṉ. His poem relating to the Cērā country is included in Puṟam Anthology.

9. *Kumaṭṭūr-k-Kaṇṇaṉār*: An Antaṇar. Author of the second decad of Patirruppattu on Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñcēralātaṉ. Was rewarded by the king, Brahmadeyam of 500 villages in Umparkkādu and a share in the revenue of the land for thirty-eight years.

10. *Kuṇṭukaṭ Pāliyātaṉ*: Supposed to have been named after his round eyes and his native village Pāli. His poem 387 of Puṟanāṉūṟu contains some information about the Cērā country.

11. *Kuṟuṅkōḻiyūr Kiḻār*: A Vellala. Has sung on Cēraṉ Yaṉaikkaṭcēy-Māntarañ-Cēral-Irumporai. His poems are included in Puṟanāṉūṟu (17, 20, and 22).

12. *Kūṭalūr Kiḻār*: A Vellala. Belonged to Kūṭalūr in Cērā country. Anthologised Aiṅkuṟunūṟu on the request of Cēramaṉ Yaṉaikkaṭcēy-Māntarañ-Cēral-Irumporai. His poem 229 in Puṟanāṉūṟu throws some light on the Cērās.

13. *Madurai-k-Kūla Vāṇikaṉ Cāttaṉār*: Author of the epic Maṇimēkalai. He refers to Vañci, capital city of the Cērās, in his epic.

14. *Māmūlaṉār*: Assigned to B. C. 245. Credited with very high spiritual powers. All his poems, relating to the Cērās, are included in Akanāṉūṟu: 65, 127, 235 and 347.

15. *Mōcikīraṉār*: Has sung on Cēral-Irumpoṟai who defeated Atiyamāṉ at Takaṭūr. He is in full praise of the king Peruñcēral Irumpoṟai in his poem of Puṟanāṉūṟu: 50.

16. *Murañciyūr Muṭinākarāyar*: Has sung on one Peruñcōṟṟu Utiyaṉ Cēralātaṉ. His only verse is included in Puṟanāṉūṟu: 2. Belonged to the Sangham Age.

17. *Nakkīrar*: Also called Nakkīraṉār, son of Madurai-k-Kaṇakkāyaṉār. Belonged to Madurai. Son of a teacher. Author of the Pattuppāṭṭu collections of Tirumurukāṟṟup-paṭai and Neṭunalvāṭai. A poem 346 in Akanāṉūṟu, relating to the Cēra country, is from his pen.

18. *Nariverūttalaiyār*: Has sung on Cēramāṉ Karuvūr-eṟiya-Oḷvāṭ-Peruñcēral-Irumpoṟai. His poem in Puṟanāṉūṟu 5, is in praise of a Cēra king.

19. *Ōrampōkiyār*: Author of the first hundred songs on 'marutam' included in Aiṅkuṟunūṟu. 'Vēṭkai-p-pattu' is from his pen which praises Ātaṉ Aviṉi.

20. *Pālai-k-Kautamaṉār*: Author of the third decad of Patiṟṟuppattu on Palyāṉai-c-Celkelu Kuṭṭuvaṉ.

21. *Paraṇar*: Author of the fifth decad of Patiṟṟuppattu on Kaṭal-piṟakkōṭṭiya-kō-c-Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ and was rewarded the tax collections from Umparkkādu and with the services of Prince Kuṭṭuvaṉ Cēral. Has also sung on Cēramāṉ Kuṭakkō Neṭuñcēralātaṉ. Cōlaṉ Uruvappaḳṟer-Iḷañcēṭ-Ceṉṉi, Cōlaṉ Vēṟ-paḳṟaṭakkai-p-Perunaṟ Killi and Vaiyāvi-k-Kopperum Pēkaṉ. His two poems in Akanāṉūṟu (152,

212) and one poem in Puranāṉūṟu (369), relate to Cērā Country.

22. Peruṅkuṉṟūr Kiḻār: Belonged to Vellala caste. Author of the ninth decad of Patiṟṟuppattu. Rewarded with gold and lands. Sang on Kuṭakkō-Iḷañcēral-Irumpoṟai, and Uruvappaḵṟēr-Iḷañcēṭceṉṉi. His two poems of Puranāṉūṟu 210 and 211 relate to the Cēra country.

23. Pēymakaḷ Iḷaveyiṉi: Presumed to have belonged to the Eyiṉar (hunter) caste. Has sung on Cēramāṉ Pālai Pāṭiya Peruṅkaṭuṅkō. (Puranāṉūṟu : 11.)

24. Poruntil Iḷaṅkīraṉār: Has sung on Cēramāṉ–Māntarañ–Cēral-Irumpoṟai. Puṟam : 53.

25. Poykaiyār: Belonged to Tondi. Has sung on Cēramāṉ Kōkkōtai Mārpaṉ. Was the poet-laureate of the court of Cēramāṉ-Kaṇaikkāl-Irumpoṟai. Credited with the authorship of Kaḷavaḻinārpatu.

26. Tiruttāmaṉār: Has sung on Cēramāṉ Vañcaṉ. (Puranāṉūṟu : 398.)

27. Uṟaiyūr Ēṇi-c-cēri Muṭamōciyār: Also called by the name, Ēṇi-c-cēri Muṭamōkiyār; Has been praised by another poet, Peruñcittiraṉār. Was an Antaṇar by caste; Has sung on Āy and Cōlaṉ Muṭittalai-k-kōp-Perunaṟ-Kiḷḷi. His poem in Puranāṉūṟu (13) relate to the Cērās.

APPENDIX—II

Cērā monarchs praised by the Poets.

1. *Ātaṉ Aviṉi*: Ōrampōkiyār has sung on him ten poems included in 'Vēṭkai' Ten of Aiṅkuṟunūṟu.

2. *Cēramāṉ Antuvaṉ Cēral Irumpoṟai*: Sung by Uṟaiyūr Ēṇi-c-cēri Muṭamōciyār (Puranāṉūṟu: 13)

3. *Cēramāṉ Cikkaṟpaḷḷi-t-tuñciya Celvak-kaṭuṅkō Vāḻiyātaṉ*: Sung by Kuṇṭukaṭ-Pāliyātaṉ (Puranāṉūṟu: 5)

4. *Cēramān Iḷañcēral Irumpoṟai*: Peruṅkuṉṟūr Kiḻār has sung the ninth decad of Patiṟṟuppattu in praise of him.

5. *Cēramān Karuvūr eṟiya Oḷvāṭ Kōpperuñcēral Irumpoṟai*: Sung by Nariverūttalaiyār (Puṟanāṉūṟu: 8, 14). Considered to be the earliest of all the Cēra kings.

6. *Cēramāṉ Kaṭuṅkō Vāḻiyātaṉ*: Sung by Kapilar (Puṟa: 387)

7. *Cēramāṉ Kōkkōtai mārpaṉ*: Sung by Poykaiyār (Puṟa. 48, 49) and Nakkīrar (Aka. 346)

8. *Cēramāṉ Kuṭṭuvaṉ Kōtai*: Sung by Kōṉāṭṭu Eṟiccilūr Madurai-k-Kumaraṉ (Puṟam: 254).

9. *Cēramāṉ Māri Veṇkō*: Sung by Auvaiyār (Puṟa: 367). Was a contemporary of Pandiyan-Kāṉappēreyil-Kaṭanta-Ukkirapperu Vaḻuti and Cōlaṉ Racacūyam-Vēṭṭa-Perunaṟkiḷḷi.

10. *Cēramāṉ-Pālaipāṭiva Peruṅ-Kaṭuṅkō*: Sung by Pēymakaḷ Iḷaveyiṉi (Puṟam: 11)

11. *Ceramāṉ Peruñcōṟṟu Utivaṉ Ceralātaṉ*: Presumed to be the earliest of the Cēra monarchs. Sung by Iḷaṅkīraṉār in Naṟṟiṇai (113) Māmūlaṉār in Akanāṉūṟu (65, 235) and in Puṟanāṉūṟu by Muṟañciyūr Muṭinākarāyar (Puṟa: 2).

12. *Cēramāṉ Vañcaṉ*: Sung by Tiruttāmaṉār (Puṟa; 398).

13. *Kaḷaṅkāy-k-Kaṇṇi Nārmuṭi-c-Cēral*: Kāppiyāṟṟu-k-Kāppiyaṉār has sung fourth decad of Patiṟṟuppattu and was amply rewarded.

14. *Kaṭalpiṟakkōṭṭiya Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ*: Son of Naṭuñcēralātaṉ by his wife Naṟcōṇai, daughter of Cōlaṉ Maṇakkiḷḷi. Sung by Paraṇar (Aka: 212; Puṟa: 171).

15. *Māntaram Poṟaiyaṉ Kaṭuṅkō*: Paraṇar has sung on him.

16. *Peruñcēral Irumpoṟai*: Sung by Mocikīraṉār (Puṟa: 50).

17. *Yāṉaikkaṭ-Cēy-Māntarañ-Cēral-Irumpoṟai*: At his instance, Aiṅkuṟunūṟu was compiled. Sung by Kuṟuṅkōḻiyūr Kiḻār,

(Puram: 17, 20, 22) Poruntil Iḷaṅkīraṉār (Puṟa: 53) and Kōṭalūr Kiḷār (Puṟa: 269).

18. *Imayavarampaṉ Neṭuñ Cēralātaṉ*: Hero of the second decad. Kumaṭṭūr-Kaṇṇaṉār was the author of the decad.

19. *Āṭukōṭpāṭṭu-c-Cēralātaṉ*: Hero of the sixth decad, whose author is Kākkai-p-pāṭiṉiyār Nac-Ceḷḷaiyār.

Appendix—III

The Poet kings of Cērā country

1. *Ceramāṉ Entai*: His only poem included in Kuṟuntokai (22).

2. *Ceramāṉ Iḷaṅkuṭṭuvaṉ*: His only poem included in Akanāṉūru. 153.

3. *Cēramān Kaṇaikkāl Irumpoṟai*: His only poem included in Puṟanāṉūṟu: 74.

4. *Cēramāṉ Kōṭṭampalattu-t-tuñciya-Mākkōtai*: His only poem included in Puṟanāṉūṟu (245).

5. *Cēramāṉ Pālai Pāṭiya Peruṅkaṭuṅkō*: His songs included in Naṟṟiṇai 9, 48, 118, 202, 224, 256, 318, 337, 384, 391 Kuṟuntokai 16, 37, 124, 135, 137, 209, 234, 262, 283, 398. Kalittokai 36 poems. Akanāṉūṟu 5, 99, 111, 155, 185, 223, 261, 267. 291, 313, 337, 379, Puṟanāṉūṟu: 282.

6. *Karuvūr-c-ceramāṉ Cāttaṉ*: His poem included in Kuṟuntokai 268.

7. *Kuṭṭuvaṉ Kaṇṇaṉ*: Son of Kuṭṭuvaṉ. His poem is included in Kuṟuntokai 179.

8. *Nampi Kuṭṭuvaṉ*: His poems are included in Kuṟuntokai 109, 243.

APPENDIX—IV

Scions of the Cērā Dynasties

1. *Atiyamān Neṭumān Añci*: Ruled from Takaṭūr. Father of Pokuṭṭeḻiṉi was a great friend and patron of the poetess Auvaiyār. Sung by Auvaiyār (Naṟṟiṇai–381) Kuṟuntokai: 91; Puṟanāṉūṟu 81 to 95, 97 to 101; 103, 104, 206, 231, 232, 235, 340 and 350, Añciyattaimakaḷ Nākaiyār (Akanāṉūṟu 352), Māmūlaṉār (Akam. 325) Aricil Kiḻār (Puṟa 230) Peruñcittiraṉār (Puṟa 207).

2. *Atiyamān Neṭumān Añci Makaṉ Pokuṭṭeḻiṉi*: Sung by Auvaiyār (Kuṟun. 80, Puṟanāṉūṟu 96, 102, 392 and Tāyaṅkaṇṇaṉār (Akanāṉūṟu 105) He is identified with Palvēl Eḻiṉi.

3. *Āṭṭaṉ Atti*: Expert in the art of dancing. Married Ātimanti, the daughter of Cōḻaṉ Karikālaṉ. Sung by Ātimantiyār, (Kuṟuntokai 31) Paraṇar (Akanāṉūṟu 76, 135, 222, 236, 376, 396 and Veḷḷivītiyār – Akanāṉūṟu 143. Referred to in Cilappatikāram (21 : 11-15).

4. *Kaṇṇeḻiṉi*: Reigned from Mutukuṉṟam (the modern Vridachalam) Sung by Māmūlaṉār (Akanāṉūṟu 197).

5. *Vāṭṭāṟṟu Eḻiṉiyātaṉ*: Ruled over a territory included in the Travancore Region. Sung by Māṅkuṭi Kiḻār (Puṟanāṉūṟu 396).

6. *Vānavaṉ Maṟavaṉ Piṭṭaṉ*: The chief of the Kutirai hills. Sung by Āḷampēri Cāttaṉār (Akanāṉūṟu: 143) and Marutam Iḷanakaṉār (Akanāṉūṟu: 77).

7. *Vāṉavaṉ*: Sung by Karuvūr-k-katappiḷḷai Cāttaṉār (Akanāṉūṭu 309), Madurai Iḷaṅ-Kaucikaṉār (Akanāṉūṟu: 381) and Mārōkkattu Nappacalaiyār (Puṟanāṉūṟu 126).

8. *Vāṉavarampaṉ*: Sung by Nakkīrar (Akanāṉūṟu 389).

APPENDIX—V

The Alien Kings who ruled over portions of Cērā country

1. *Nāñcil Vaḷḷuvaṉ*: Also called, Nāñcil Porunaṉ. Ruled over the Nāñcil hills. Was a chieftain in the Pandiya army. Sung by Ciṟaipperiyaṉār (Puṟanāṉūṟu 137) Marutaṉilanākaṉār (Puṟanāṉūṟu 138, 139) Auvaiyār (Puṟanāṉūṟu 140) and Karuvūr-k-Katappiḷḷai (Puṟanāṉūṟu 380).

2. *Naṉṉaṉ*: Also called, Naṉṉaṉ Vēṇmāṉ and Naṉṉaṉ Utiyaṉ. Ruled over the northern frontiers of the Malaināḍu. Hills bearing the names 'Koṇkāṉa Nāṭṭu Ēḻiṟkuṉṟam' and 'Pāḻiccilampu' were included in his territories. Sung by Māmūlaṉār (Akanāṉūṟu 15, 97, 349) Paraṇar (Akanāṉūṟu 258, 356) Muḷḷilūrppūtiyār (Akanāṉūṟu 173) and Mōcikīraṉār (Aka. 392).

3. *Vēḷ Āy*: Also called by Aṇtiraṉ. Belonged to Vēḷir caste. Potiyil and Kaviram hills and the places called 'Āykuṭi' and Talaiyāṟu within his territory. Sung by Uṟaiyūr Ēṇi-c-cēri Muṭamōciyār. Puṟa: 127 to 135, 241, 374, 375 Kuṭṭuvan Kīraṉ (Puṟa: 240) Tuṟaiyūr Ōṭai Kiḻār (Puṟa: 136) Kāviri-p-pūmpaṭṭiṉattu-k-kāri-k-kaṇṇaṉār (Naṟṟiṇai 237) Mōcikīraṉār (Kuṟu: 84) Paraṇar (Naṟ: 167 and Aka: 152, 198), Umaṭṭūr-kiḻār-makaṉār Peruṅkoṟṟaṉār (Aka: 69) and by Iṭaikkaḻi nāṭṭu Nallūr Nattattaṉār (Ciṟupāṇ: 96-99).

APPENDIX—VI

(Places, and Mountains)

Places:

1. *Kuṭanāṭu*: Lay beyond Otuṅkāḍu infested with highway robbers. Comprised mostly of marutam lands.

2. *Vañci*: The capital city of the Cērā kings. Various castes and communities attending to different trades and industries lived in separate streets allotted to them.

3. *Karuvūr*: A big city. Lay on the banks of the river Āṉ Porunai.

4. *Muciṟi*: A sea-port town on the western coast. A great deal of imports and exports passed through this town. The river, Cuḷḷiyam Pēriyāṟu joined the sea by Muciṟi. Artistically decorated vessels of the Yavaṉar, laden with gold and pepper plied in the Pēriyāṟu.

5. *Tondi*: A sea-port town, on the west coast. Famous for its cultivable lands and merchantile trade.

6. *Māntai*: A sea-port town, on the west coast.

7. *Veḷiyam*: According to Thiru M. Raghava Ayangar, it lay within the Travancore region; and comprised of the present Chengancheri and Mavelikarai.

8. *Vākai-p-Peruntuṟai*: Lay within the Kuṭa nādu. Site of battle between Kaḷaṅkāykkaṇṇi Nārmuṭi-c-Cēral with Naṉṉaṉ.

9. *Kaḷumalam*: Belonged to Kuṭṭuvaṉ.

Mountain and hills:

1. *Kollimalai*: The present Kolli-hills. Famous for the legends about a Pāvai (Image of a beautiful maiden) which bewitched men with its charms and enticed them to their deaths. Counter part of the Circe and the Sirens of the Greek legends.

2. *Kuḷumūr*: Belonged to Cēraṉ Utiyaṉ. Lay at the fort of the hills, called Pallānkuṉṟu.

Festival:

The Festival of the Cērās: Related to the birth days of the Cērā kings. People feasted and rejoiced. Great assemblies were held in which famous scholars and theologeans took part and discussed their respective creeds. Maṇimēkalai, the ascetic daughter of Kōvalaṉ and Mātavi took part in a philosophical debate on one such occasion.

APPENDIX—VII

(1) Substance of the Eighth Tirumoḻi in a nut-shell

(Lallaby of Kausalya)

Stanza 1: "Oh! son of Kausalya! one who brought about the death of Ravana, the ten-headed monster of Lanka! you have now taken your abode in Tirukkaṇṇapuram. You are nector to me. Oh! Rama! I sing you to sleep"

Stanza 2: "Oh! Raghava! You have created the Creator who, in turn, created all the worlds. You have aimed arrows to pierce the chest of Thataka who is of impregnable strength. You captivate hosts of people who come to worship you at Kaṇṇapuram. You have enslaved by your beauty, all the beings inhabiting all the eight directions of the world (eight cardinal points). I sing you to sleep".

Stanza 3: "Oh! Raghava! the son-in-law of Janaka, and the son of Dasaratha, the king of kings! You are residing in Tirukkaṇṇapuram, which has holy Theerthams, more sanctified than even the Ganges. I sing you to sleep".

Stanza 4: "Oh! Raghava! the consort of Sita! You are residing in Tirukkaṇṇapuram, where the bees hum the raga 'Kāmaram'. You have wielded the bow 'Sarnga' dexterously. I sing you to sleep".

Stanza 5: "Oh! Dasarathi! You have handed over your Kinship to your younger brother Bharatha and with another younger brother Lakshmana, you entered the Dhandaka forest; you are a hero and on your chest, resides 'Veera Lakshmi'. Oh, Lord of Tirukkaṇṇapura, I sing you to sleep".

Stanza 6: "The entire Ayodhya followed you to Dandakaranya. You are nectar to your devotees. Oh! Lord of Ayodhya! You have taken abode at Tirukkaṇṇapuram wherein great sages lived. You attach the greatest importance to the words of your step-mother Kaikeyi. I sing you to sleep".

Stanza 7: "Oh, Lord of Ayodhya! During the deluge, you as a child on a Banyan leaf, protected the whole universe by keeping them enclosed within your stomach. You killed Vāli, the unjust, gave the kingdom of Kishkindha to Sugriva, his younger brother, enthroning him as king. You are residing in Tiruk-kaṇṇapuram now and you are the Lord of Tiru-vāli-t-Tirunagari also. I sing you to sleep".

Stanza 8: "Oh! Sri Rama! You have constructed the bridge using the big boulders of stones brought from hills around and through that bridge, crossed over to Lanka to destroy that city. You churned the ocean of Milk and gave 'Amrith' to the Devas. Oh, Lord of Tirukkaṇṇapura, I sing you to sleep".

Stanza 9: "Oh! Son of Dasaratha! Oh Raghava! You are the destroyer of Lanka with your bow. You are residing in Tiru-k-Kaṇṇapuram reputed for its many lotus and lily tanks. You have always bestwoed grace on younger brothers, (to the detriment of elder brothers) I sing you to sleep".

Stanza 10: "Oh! Raghava! You have created the Devas, the Asuras, and the eight directions (eight cardinal points). You have reclined at Srirangam on the serpent and is worshipped by all people. Now, you have taken your abode at Tirukkaṇṇapuram rendered fertile by the flow of Cauvery. You are well-versed in archery. I sing you to sleep".

(2) Substance of the Tenth Tirumoḷi in a nut-shell

(*The summary of the Rāmāyana story*)

Stanza 1: Rama was born in Ayodhya to give residence to the Ikshuvaku family in which he was born, to redeem the Devas from the clutches of the Demons. He is now residing in Tillainagar-Tiru-c-Citrakūṭam. I do not know, when I am going to feast my eyes with His divine beauty and gain His grace".

Stanza 2: "Oh, people of the world! Let all of you know, that the Lord at Tillainagar-Tiru-c-Citrakūṭam, worshipped always by the three-thousand Brahmins of Tillai, is the same Ramachandra

who killed 'Thataka' by aiming his illustrious arrow and who guarded later the yagna of Viswamitra by killing Subahu and his associate demons".

Stanza 3: "I will prostrate before the holy feet of those devotees who worship Rama at Tillainagar-Tiru-c-Citrakūṭam. He is the same Rama, who married the beautiful lotus-eyed Sita by breaking the bow of Siva and who humiliated Parasurama on his way to Ayodhya from Mithila, after the marriage".

Stanza 4: "Those devotees, who worship the Lord at Tillainagar Tiru-c-Citrakūṭam are really blessed and even the Devas are not equal to them. The Lord here is the same Rama, who renounced the Kingdom, as per the directions of Kaikeyi (his step-mother), who became the friend of Guha, the hunter–chieftain, when crossing the Ganges, and who gave later his sandals to Bharatha at Citrakuṭa Hill, to act as his representative in ruling the kingdom".

Stanza 5: "This land is really blessed, as it is trodden by the devotees of the Lord of Tillainagar-Tiru-c-Citrakūṭam. He is the Lord who killed Viradha; who received the divine bow from sage Agastya; who chopped off the nose of Surpanaka, the demoness; who killed Kara and Dushana, and who took away the life of Maricha who came in the guise of a golden deer.

Stanza 6: "I intend worshipping the feet of the devotees of the Lord Tillainagar-Tiru-c-Citrakūṭam. This lord is the same Sri Rama, who, stung by the pangs of separation from Sita, wandered in the forest; who gave 'Mukti' (heaven) to Jatayu, the eagle-King; who made friends with Sugriva to kill Vali, the Vanara king; and who was responsible for humiliating the pride of Rama, sending Hanuman as His emissary, who in turn, burnt the whole of Lanka".

Stanza 7: "I do not want to rule over this mundane kingdom, but, I will cherish only the coronotion of wearing the lotus feet of Rama as my crown. This Rama is responsible for humiliating the sea build over it; who crossed over the Lanka

through the bridge and brought about the destruction of Ravana, the king of Lanka; He crowned Vibishna, as the king of Lanka and rejoined Sita, the incarnation of Lakshmi".

Stanza 8: "I would not care even for nectar; I care only to hear the story of my Lord Rama and to see him at Tillainagar-Tiru-c-Citrakūṭam. He is the Lord, who returned in triumph to his capital city, Ayodhya, of high and beautiful buildings. He is he, who heard about the previous life of Ravana, direct from the mouth of sage Agastya, and who was able to hear His own 'Charitram' from the lips of his sons, Lava and Kusa, who recited it in slokas".

Stanza 9: "I would not suffer hereafter from any malady or distress, for I am always meditating on Sri Rama of Tlllainagar Tiru-c-Citrakūṭam. He is the Lord, who killed Champuka, in order to retrieve the life of Brahmin youth; He is the one, who wore the ornaments studded with invaluable gems presented to him by sage Agastya. (Remember these ornaments were worn after his return to Ayodhya). He is the one, who brought about the death of the demon Lavana by sending his brother Satrugna for the purpose. He is the one who forsook also his dear brother Lakshmana in order to fulfill the curse of saga Durvasa".

Stanza 10: "I request all the Vaishnavite to understand the greatness of Sri Rama of Tillainagar Tiru-c-Citrakūṭam and to spend their life-time in worshipping Him. He is the Lord, who was able to send to Heaven, all animate and inanimate beings, when He himself retired to His Heavenly abode. He is there at Vaikunta with his four shoulders, and with Garuda by His side; and He is welcomed by the Nitya-suris, on his return to Paramapatha".

(3) Substance of the Ninth Tirumoli in a nut-shell

(*Wailing of Dasaratha*)

Stanza 1: "Oh! Rama! while all the people of Ayodhya fell at your lotus-feet and were praying to be their King, at that particular juncture, when you are ready to occupy the throne

as per my earlier direction, suddenly a change came over my mind and under the machinstions of Kaikeyi, I have ordered you to leave the city and consequently, Oh good son! my intention of celebrating your coronation stands condemned".

Stanza 2: "Oh Rama! I uttered the harsh words asking you to leave the Kingdom with all its attendant peraphernalia and to proceed to the forest at once, and you, as per my directions, left Ayodhya, followed by Sita and Lakshmana. I do not know how you have walked through the rugged forest; I cannot do anything, I am not my own self; I am completely paralysed".

Stanza 3: "Oh son of handsome Kausalya! Oh! one with strong broad shoulders and of black complexion! you are accustomed to sleep in a bed of soft feathers of doves, but now, you have to sleep in the forest on rugged rocky ground under shady trees. I do not know how you are going to adjust yourself to such hardships.

Stanza 4: "Oh Rama! Come near; see my face once and then depart. You have broken, in twain, the bow of Siva, to marry the beautiful Sita. I am really moved by your righteous behaviour. My heart refuses to break into two halves, though I have asked you to go to the forest infested with elephants."

Stanza 5: "I have driven you to the forest wherein the pebbles are as sharp as needles. They may prick your delicate feet, causing them to bleed; they cannot bear the heat of the sun. You may even suffer from starvation because of a dearth of food. You are going to the forest only to carry out my word. I have been very cruel to you, by listening to the words of Kaikeyi; but what can I do now after allowing myself to be completely paralysed.

Stanza 6: "In future, I am not going to hear your sweet words. I may not embrace you closely to my bosom and kiss

you and fondle you. I am not destined to see your majestic gait and the charm of your handsome face. I do not think, that I will live hereafter, after having committed a base and mean crime."

Stanza 7: "Oh! Brahmins of Ayodhya! Sumitra! and Vasishta! Please let me know your mind on one thing that I desire to know from you. Is it proper on my part to have exiled Rama to the forest asking him to wear the hermits attire depriving him of gold ornaments, and in fact, all the grandeur and pomp of his royal position. I beseech you to give your considered opinion."

Stanza 8: "Oh Kaikeyi! You have asked the eldest of sons, Rama, to go to the forest and he has left with Sita and Lakshmana. By this act, you have brought disgrace not only on yourself but also on your son Bharatha and on me, your husband. My wife is departing and what benefit are you going to derive by sending me to another world? After having caused all these unhappy events, you only want to live in comfort in this world."

Stanza 9: "Oh! Rama! You have humiliated Parasurama by putting down all his prowess and spiritual strength. You never cared to look into our grief, inclusive of your mother Kousalya's; nor cared to see what would happen to your kingly status. You have carried out my word in letter and spirit, least realising in what distress you are leaving us all. Oh Rama! grant me the boon of at least having you beside me, as my son in my future births."

Stanza 10: "Oh, greatest of the Manus! I am departing to the other world, because of your departure to the forest as desired by Kaikeyi, who became a tool in the hands of the hunch-backed Manthara; both Kausalya and Sumitra (Sumitra is the mother of Lakshmana, the younger brother of Rama) are suffering from extreme mental agony due to your separation."

(4) Substance of the Sixth Tirumoli in a net-shell

(Pranks and Plays of Lord Krishna with the Gopis of Ayppādi)

Stanza 1: This is the nature of the utterance of the gopi, who is standing on a sand-dune on the banks of the Jumna, in winter season, shivering with cold, by the blowing of the winter wind. She is standing there, waiting for her lover Krishna to come and embrace her, but he has not come there as expected and hence, the gopi chastises him by saying that she has to suffer because of trusting in his word.

Stanza 2: "Oh! I know your tricks. Seeing my fellow-gopi in the neighbourhood churning curd in her house, you ran there shouting "I will also help in churning with you, so that you may finish your work quickly," and you have done so with sweet trailing in your face and locks of hair flowing down and your purple lips pulsating."

Stanza 3: "Oh! Krishna! You are not true to any one of our gopis. You look down upon one and forsake her in order to talk to another, but you love her also in distress by approaching a third; there again, you utter lies and dupe her and then you pass on to the fourth, while you are not true even to her. Your cunning tricks also grow with your age. Your "Maya" cannot be surmounted by any one."

Stanza 4: "Oh! Krishna! You sucked the poison of Poothana when you are expected to suck the 'Amrith' of Yasodha, and people began to deride you as mad. Now, you have discarded me, but on the other hand, gave pleasure to my lady, who carried a message to you, from me. This unrighteous deed can suit only a cruel person like you."

Stanza 5: "Oh! Krishna! I saw you going with another girl in darkness along my street veiling your head with your upper garment as a sort of cover to escape notice. Not only that; You looked at another gopi and by show of hands you asked her to meet you at a rendezvous. Then, after doing all

these things, why should you come to me? I am not going to accept you. You may go over to them, leaving me alone."

Stanza 6: Another gopi says:- "Oh! Lord! as soon as I fell fast sleep in the dead of night, you left me in the bed itself and went unnoticed in the same night to another gopi's house, stayed with her for the next day also. Now, why should you come to stay with me? Go away; I do not want you."

Stanza 7: Another gopi says: "Oh! Lord! I am not the same gopi to believe you. I have changed now. I am not of the old stuff. You need not come to me, in this delayed manner. One day's experience with you is enough for me. I believed you and I have been captivated by your physical beauty. Your false-cringing words will not deter me. You can go and join other gopis."

Stanza 8: Another gopi says "Oh! Lord! Asking me to come to a particular place to meet you and then going to another 'Jasmine Bower' to enjoy the company of another gopi, is detestable; Not only that; seeing that I am watching you, you simply sneaked away from the place, holding your garments by your hand, as if, you are terribly afraid of me. I know your tricks. One day or other, you must come to me, and then, I will wreak vengeance upon You."

Stanza 9: Another gopi says: "Oh! Lord! Bedecking yourself is an enchanting manner! you have joined the company of all other gopis and in their midst, you are playing on the flute, as if charmed by their beauty; I beg of you to come one day to play on the flute, solely for my benefit and my benefit only and not for others."

(5) Substance of the Seventh Tirumoli in a nut-shell.

(*The Lamentation of Devaki*)

Stanza 1: "I have not been fortunate in singing a lullaby for my child Krishna, calling him as one 'as sweet as sugarcane,' 'as the lotus eyed,' 'as of dark blue complexion as the sea,' 'as

a young elephant,' 'as my son' etc., Thus, I feel I am the most unfortunate of mothers in this world."

Stanza 2: "My child Krishna will be playing with the parrots to the canopy of his cradle and he will be lying in the cradle in a beautiful posture with closed hand, as if showing his fist, while at the same time, as his legs lie folded within the cradle. He will resemble a baby elephant sleeping soundly but I am not fortunate in feasting my eyes with such beauty. I am indeed a sinner, Oh! Krishna!"

Stanza 3: "Oh! Krishna! If the womenfolk of Āyppādi, when fondling you, were to ask you to show your father, you will point out with your fingers, Nandagopa, the foster-father, whereas in fact, Vasudeva is your father. Vasudeva, my husband, is not destined to have the fortune of being known as your father."

Stanza 4: "Oh! I am the worst sinner; it would have been better if I wear dead, for, I have lost the bliss of being addressed as Mummy (the mother); I have lost the pleasure of experiencing the joys, which my child in arms bestowed at Āyppādi, though I am able to see him as a charming youth, now standing before me."

Stanza 5: "I have lost the pleasure of enjoying the sight of your head-jewels dangling on your hair, when you kiss me of seeing in you a replica of your father; of your angry words emanating from your mouth putting at the same time your finger on the lips, as a sign of warning to me. All these divine pleasures were seen and experienced by Yashodha, your foster-mother, whereas I, your real mother, have lost them; Oh! what a heavy loss! Indeed, I am the worst sinner in the world."

Stanza 6: Oh! Krishna! I have lost the lovable embrace of yours, dusting my breast, when with tottering steps you will come home after playing in the muddy street. I am not destined to take the remnants of the food, eaten by you, which has been

macerated by your tiny hands and fingers; I do not know, why I was born in this world. I do not know, why my mother gave birth to such a sinner.

Stanza 7: "Oh! Govinda! I have lost the supreme pleasure of keeping you in embrace so that when you suck me, you will with one hand be rubbing my nipple-head and at the same time with a smiling face, looking at my countenance with both eyes. Indeed, a loss unparalleled."

Stanza 8: As usual, Krishna after stealing butter, wanted to run away from the clutches of Yasodha, but, he was caught redhanded and he pretended, as if, he was terribly afraid of her, when she brought a rope to beat him; his timid looks, his throbbing lips, and his pathetic pleadings were enjoyed by Yasodha; and really, Yasodha had attained Eternal Bliss, because she was destined to see and enjoy the pranks of Krishna. I am denied of such heavenly pleasures – so laments Devaki.

Stanza 9: "I am not fated to enjoy your adventurous deeds, like lifting aloft the Govardhana hill as an umbrella to save the cows, and cowherds, from heavy rain; the 'Kuravai' dance, which you had with the gopis; the dance with the pots on your head; the way in which you disposed of the demon who came in the form of a calf by kicking him high on another devilish 'Viḷā Tree,' thus bringing about the death of both the demons; the way in which you humiliated the serpent Kalinga. These adventures have been done as Boyish pranks. It is possible for me by your grace to see them again?" – So mourns Devaki.

Stanza 10: "You have sucked the poison of "pēycci" as if, it is milk, and were able to destroy her and also Kamsa who commissioned her to kill you; but I was not able to feed you with my breast milk; I have no other solace except longing to see you once again. It is only with that purpose, I am keeping my life in my body. Anyhow, you are able to get a good mother in 'Yasodha' so mourns Devaki.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR'S WORKS IN ENGLISH.

1. *The Status of Women in Tamilnadu during the Sangam Age*

University of Madras, 1976.

> "......this clear, concise and illuminating historical commentary on the status of women in this part of our vast country......"
>
> — **Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah**

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2. *A Study of the Literature of the Cēra Country (upto 11th Century A. D.)*

University of Madras, 1980.

> "Dr. C. Balasubramanian deserves to be congratulated for this critical work which will go a long way to help scholars and researchers in the field of South Indian History and Culture".
>
> — **Dr. G. R. Damodaran**